M. Gray

A THREE-LEGGED TOUR IN GREECE

[*March* 24–*May* 4, 1925]

HEAD OF THESEUS FROM THE WEST PEDIMENT OF THE ZEUS TEMPLE AT OLYMPIA.

(After the cast in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: by kind permission of Professor J. D. Beazley.)

A THREE-LEGGED TOUR IN GREECE

[*March* 24—*May* 4, 1925]

BY

ETHEL SMYTH, D.B.E., D.Mus.

"Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted, holy ground."
Childe Harold, Canto II. 88.

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To
Elizabeth Williamson

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NOTE

N.B. My special thanks are due to Messrs. E. Wasmuth of Berlin for permission to reproduce 5 plates from their publication *Griechenland*, a collection of 176 pictures that give a wonderful idea of the country. Price 15s. This book belongs to a series called *Orbis Terrarum*, which includes India, Canada, and . . . England!

I also acknowledge gratefully the courtesy of the British School of Archaeology, Athens; the English Photographic Company, Athens; and Monsieur Ziffo of the Bank of Athens ("Collection M. Z."), who have permitted the reproduction of the pictures beneath which are their names.

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A THREE-LEGGED TOUR IN GREECE

I ADOPT this title for the following account of one of the most enthralling experiences of a lifetime, because it seems to me that a tour carried out by a great-aunt and her great-niece has something of the three-legged race about it. In both cases the exuberance of the younger and more active of the partners has to be toned down to the scale of his yoke-fellow—who thereupon becomes equal to feats of pace and endurance that could never have been accomplished in single harness.

Anyhow it is easy to recognise the workings of some such principle in the adventure embarked upon by myself and my great-niece Elizabeth Williamson, herein called "E." for short. The knowledge that your companion—a lithe, long-legged creature, swift as a greyhound—would think nothing of tearing off fifteen miles in any direction to summon first aid, certainly does add wings to your spirit of enterprise in a country like Southern Greece, where there are neither roads nor wheeled traffic, but only mule transport. And as I am writing with one eye on my contemporaries, no false modesty shall hinder my saying

straight out, that if we were about to learn with amazement the capacities, at a pinch, of four-legged animals, it was equally astonishing and gratifying to find out what can be accomplished by a two-legged animal well on in years, given the stimulus of the right company, perpetual electric shocks of beauty, and an air so intoxicating that, once your lungs and eyes have sampled it, you feel certain it must have been a factor in the evolution of the Greek miracle. In fact both E. and I, who, as students, lead rather sedentary lives, came back from this very arduous trip fitter than we had been for ages.

We were in bonds as to fixed dates, and I had planned our tour—for planning was my department—with greatest care, basing both on guide-books and the reports of friends who knew what they were talking about. But on attempting to work it all out with London experts, we discovered a fact familiar to many travellers in Greece, that these wiseacres are of little use when asked to step off the beaten track and rough out a path for you in countries not yet organised for sightseers. I believe there are more than a dozen tourist agencies in London, and we afterwards gathered that all are in the same case. As regards E. and me, they seemed able to do little but raise difficulties, starting with the main one that for two lone ladies, ignorant of the language, to dream of travelling without a dragoman was sheer lunacy, even though, as was our shameless boast, French, German,

and Italian were print to us, and though one of us had enough ancient Greek to read modern Greek lettering, and consequently tackle phrase-books and names of streets. Now a dragoman costs £1 a day and his keep; and apart from the perpetual nuisance of his presence we learned from others that bills expand at his approach like mercury in front of a fire. Nevertheless throughout a five weeks' postal and telephonic contest the hope of inflicting a dragoman on us was never quite abandoned.

Again, the idea of travelling by land to Salonica and gradually working down to Athens, taking on our way the places we wished to see—that is, Larissa, the Vale of Tempe, and the monasteries at Meteora—seemed particularly obnoxious to our advisers, simply, I imagine, because it is not usually done. A characteristic battle raged round the word "Tempe", it being maintained that as there was no such station on the railway we could not possibly get out there. I pointed out that on the firm's own map there is a station called "Tembi" at the mouth of the river Peneus, which evidently must be the place in question. "Very doubtful," replied Messrs. X.; "and as there is no one here to consult about it we cannot accept responsibility in this matter." And long after information gleaned by us at the Greek Legation had settled the point in my favour, the word Tempe was always accompanied in our expert's letters with signs indicative of doubt and derision, thus: "Tempe ? ! "

Also, in spite of my very unequivocal letters, every point proposed by them and rejected by me was urged again and again, with ever-increasing emphasis as the time for our departure drew near.

But the worst of all was that up to within ten days of that date I had been kept in ignorance as to the names of the hotels at Salonica and Larissa at which, so they assured me, their agent on the spot had reserved rooms for us! At last, in despair, I wrote direct to Athens, entreating this same agent to divulge the secret of those names in a wire for which I enclosed a ten-shilling note; and the concluding paragraph of my letter ran thus:

> As you may be otherwise advised by your London house, please note:
>
> (1) That we *will* spend a night at Salonica, even if obliged to spend it on the platform, as threatened by your people; (2) that we will *not* go on straight to Athens by the night express; (3) that we *will* spend a night or two at Larissa; (4) that we will *not* have a motor-car from Athens sent to meet us at Tempe or Tembi; (5) that if you send a dragoman to meet us at Salonica or elsewhere I will not even speak to him.

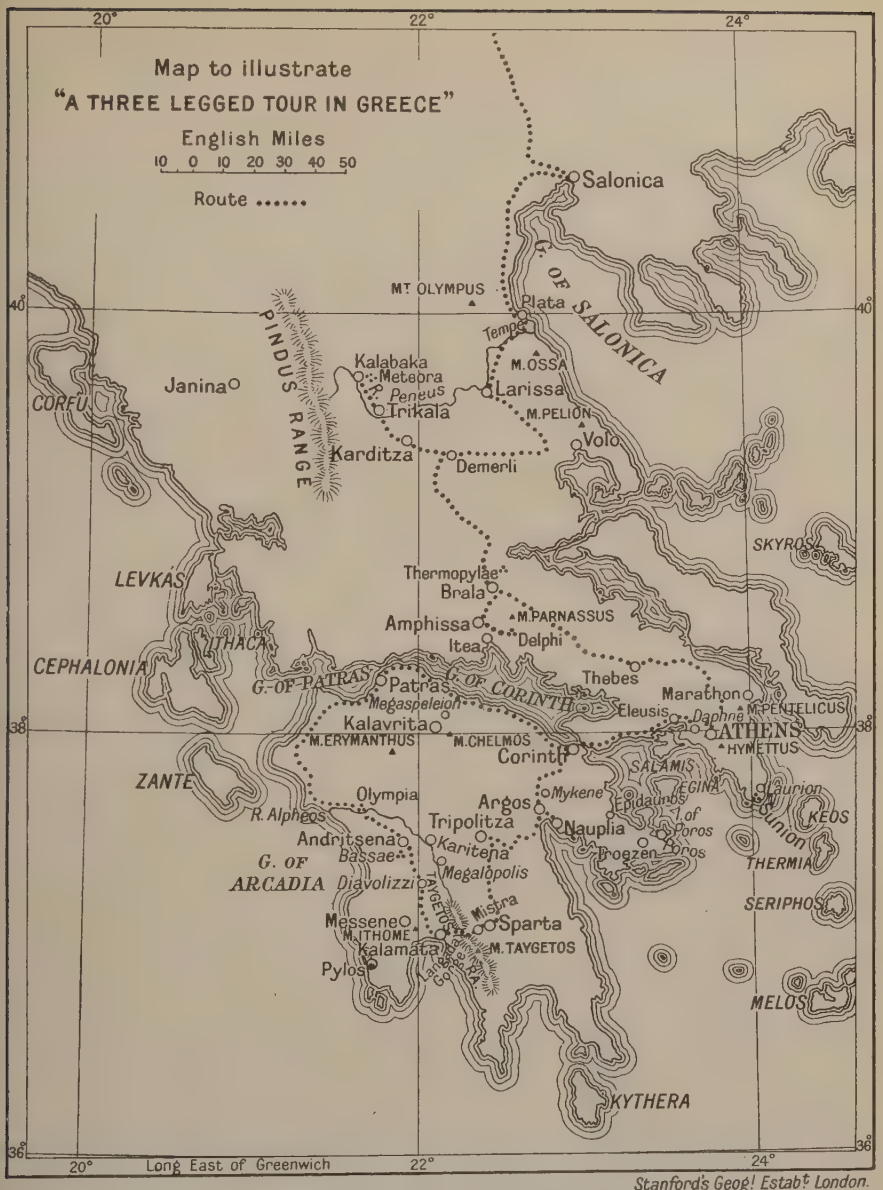
Will it be believed that in reply I got a forty-word telegram, paid for with my own money, in which, though there was no mention whatsoever of any hotels, every single one of the courses I had barred was once more urged, the whole concluding with the words: "*awaiting instructions*"!! Even we ourselves could not help admiring this last display of tenacity!

The explanation seems to be that agencies get bonuses on big through trains ; hence their passion for rushing one down Greece at midnight shut up in a box, rather than permit a leisurely daylight glance at negligible objects such as Olympus and the Pass of Thermopylae, which can be seen from the line, and on which we had of course set our undisciplined hearts. In the same way they have " interest " in certain Greek hotels, but none of these lies, I believe, in North Greece ; hence their indifference to our fate in Salonica and Larissa. I will only add that all the information they gave us, whether about the railway strike then running a languid and patchy course in Greece, about trains, hotels, motors, or brigands, turned out to be so very inaccurate that we came to believe that one of the " sources of information " they were always alluding to must be a practical joker.

Knowing how many have suffered, and will yet suffer, from these exasperating methods, I make no apology for dwelling on this matter at some length ; more especially as it will be my privilege and pleasure by-and-by to indicate to other would-be travellers in Greece the one and only way of salvation.

FROM LONDON, *VIA* SALONICA, *TO* LARISSA *AND* TEMPE

ON MARCH 24, in spite of X. & Co., we started, and there is nothing to relate until Belgrade was reached. From that point to Salonica the train became so much more Orient than Express, that E. calmly stepped out in mid-country, as did other passengers, to pick flowers. But compared to the pace and habits of the real Greek trains our progression was at lightning speed. Passing through Serbia you feel that one people at any rate has benefited by the war. Peasants swarmed as far as eye could reach, cultivating what seemed to be very grateful soil ; it was as though at the final, completed relaxation of the Turkish grip energy was bubbling up visibly. All these workers wore national dress, and between Belgrade and the Greek frontier not a single reach-me-down saddened eyes that in Greece proper, even in the Peloponnesus, see nothing else. Here, as throughout Thessaly, mosques and minarets pull the landscape together ; and those who have heard the Muezzin will understand that, in defiance of logic, one missed " that chanted mournful strain, like some lone spirit's o'er the plain ", for now of course the minarets are silent.



Stanford's Geog! Estab.t London.

SKETCH MAP OF THE ROUTE FOLLOWED.

In the train we had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of an English engineer and his Greek wife, the Woodleys, who live in Athens. Forthwith, louder than any call to prayer, the sound of a quartette in abuse of tourist agencies arose in that compartment, and I confess it was comforting to hear one's views confirmed by people qualified to speak. I have said that a way of salvation will be pointed out, and it was now for the first time that we heard the name of the Great Power who, from Athens onwards, was to make all things smooth for us on our own lines, and who will be properly introduced when the moment arrives. Our new friends, who most kindly engaged us to look them up at Athens, parted from us at Salonica, borne southward in the through train so passionately loved by Messrs. X. of London, and we found a room at the second hotel we knocked at, our taxi-driver accepting without demur the exact sum Mr. Woodley had told us to give him.

We had now spent three nights in a train, and our first idea next morning was a bath. Little did we guess that to ask for a bath in these latitudes is like asking for a Rolls-Royce or a diamond tiara. That bath was the last we had for many a long day; indeed, nearly the last of our lives. It was a dilapidated old geyser that stood in a tiny windowless room, and was heated by means of an open wood fire ; you could hardly see it for steam, and the odd runnels cut in the stone floor could not contain the violent and inexplicable jets of

boiling water with which it kept on submerging everything. Still the Majestic Hotel, though not very majestic, has some claim to call itself an hotel, and among the many patronised by us this can only be said of four or five.

It was not part of our programme to explore Salonica, a town in ruins, half consumed by fire, and wholly unattractive. Yet when, among streets still standing, you are able, as E. was, to spell out names such as Sophocles Street, and The Way of Wisdom, a certain thrill corrected your tendency to revile the inhabitants for acquiescing in such chaos.[1] As far as we could judge no one minded it, and you rather wondered if the town would ever be rebuilt. It seemed as though Turkish dominion had stifled every energy except a commercial quarrelsomeness which, so they say, at present nullifies the advantages of possessing this superb port. But that does not affect the unearthly beauty of Olympus as seen across the bay.

To enjoy it in peace we made an early rise and scaled the hills behind the town, but as the track was rough and dusty, we rashly turned off to the right through the rather grand gateway of what we took to be a public park. Alas ! about three-quarters of a mile farther up the mountain we discovered that we were in the grounds of a vast Sanatorium and separated from the modest peak of our desires by a seven-foot stone wall. There was no way out, and two people we

[1] See footnote p. 144.

fancied were hospital nurses gave us to understand in eloquent gesture that there was nothing for it but to retrace our steps—a hideous and inadmissible prospect. By this time the terraces and balconies were rapidly filling up with patients and their ministrants, the former evidently quite equal to the ceaseless conversation which we subsequently found out is still the leading trait of the Greek. The two nurses, like animated semaphores, continued to drive in their point, but feigning to misunderstand it, with many a smile we made for an angle of the wall where signs of scrambling were to be detected by an observant eye. E. is six feet high and agile as a monkey; a slightly jutting stone, a leap, and she was at the top, ready to haul me up after her, and amid the agitated screams of our observers we dropped out of sight, I with a torn coat and scarified wrist but otherwise intact. From the time we emerged again until we reached the summit about half an hour later, you could not have placed a pin on those terraces and balconies, so packed were they with spectators who, to judge by the cries and comments wafted upwards during the whole ascent, believed they were watching the proceedings of escaped lunatics; and I feel certain that we are now legendary figures in the Salonica Sanatorium.

As seen from these hills Olympus appears to rise straight out of the sea, and E. and I, by a very common trick of telepathy, had simultaneously the same vision —that of silver-footed Thetis diving under the waves,

after Zeus had been successfully cajoled, to console Achilles for the loss of Briseis by predicting to him his early death. After these flights it was only fitting to tell my niece a story I had recently heard about a woman sailing home from Constantinople, who, when some one pointed out the snow on Olympus, cried, "Well, *I* thought it was snow, but the captain says it's grease".

Next day we took the train to Larissa, where is the only hotel, I believe, that exists between Salonica and Athens. On the way thither we discovered various important facts, among which are the following. Wherever a train stops—and this constantly happens for reasons no one can explain—it stops for ten minutes, upon which half the travellers tumble out on to the line and make acquaintance with people in the other compartments. There are no time-tables published. A few copies are printed for inspectors and station-masters, and sometimes you may get a sight of these, but you are none the wiser, for what is put down there comes to pass but seldom. As for the general public, no one has exact knowledge as to when a given train is due; but this is of no consequence, since time exists not for the Greek. People come dawdling along somewhere about the hour they think a train ought to be arriving, and either compose themselves to sleep on the embankment, or plunge into ecstasies of unbroken colloquy—there seems to be no *via media*—till it turns

up, often two hours or so late. Up to now I had always taken Telemachus's remark to Nestor, " I could listen to you all day ", either for irony, as from that odious young man to an aged bore, or else as an outburst of exaggerated civility to a stranger, which would perhaps account for his having none left for home use. Not at all. As I now perceived, any Greek might, at any hour of the day or night, make this remark with perfect sincerity to any other Greek and be quite certain his interlocutor would be ready to gratify him.

As regards refreshment on the way, most of the guards speak a little French, and you would gather that food might be procured at such and such a station. Latin characters are as unknown in Greece as in Turkey, and since I was unable to read the Greek lettering, upon E. lay the awful responsibility of identifying the station when reached. True, we had a luncheon basket—one that deposited four little heaps of dry rot wherever you set it down, and gently rained the same from the rack on unsuspecting heads below ; but being under the spell of delusive words pronounced at Salonica, " there is a restaurant at Plati ", we had not replenished it. Alas ! the restaurant turned out to be a hovel in which you could buy, if helped, as we were, by the extreme civility of fellow-passengers, splendid brown bread, hard-boiled eggs, and nothing else. Sometimes, but rarely—for the race is abstemious —they have wine, but only of the resinous kind the Greeks are said to prefer, though I cannot but think

this must be because it is cheap and wholesome. Butter and cheese it is almost impossible to get anywhere except at Athens, and if the peasants ever do eat the only meat we came across on our travels, which was lamb, we never saw them doing it. In fact they seem to live wholly on bread, onions, and oranges.

Arrived at Larissa—a fascinating town of minarets, storks, cranes, and tame kestrels, but not a place one would desire to make a prolonged stay in—we presented with pride to the unfriendly landlord of the Panhellinion Hotel a letter of recommendation from a kind English acquaintance, a young archaeologist who had made that place his headquarters for months while digging in Macedonia one short year ago, and who believed that his good word would ensure us a rapturous welcome. The event taught us how short-lived, how illusory perhaps, is the excellent impression we fancy we leave behind us ! The landlord shook his head, waved the letter at us in contempt, sent a bellow up the stairs, and disappeared into the café whence he had emerged to deal with our wholly uninteresting case. This was the only instance of incivility met with in Greece. An old woman led us to rooms grandly fitted with electric bulbs and plugs, but unfortunately the current had not been installed. As regards Grecian washing arrangements (I am not speaking of Athens, of course), the country is, as we know, an arid one, and the waterworks leave much to be desired. There are hotels with a pump some-

where, whence water may be drawn (here our washing water was brought up in a tiny teapot), and there are other hotels with bathroom and hot and cold taps complete, but no water laid on. In fact the geyser at Salonica was in every sense the high-water mark of civilisation in North Greece. But as the country is very clean, the hotels and beds ditto, and as you don't get dirty in the trains, not at least in March, you soon get quite calm about never having a real bath. Indeed it is curious how easily the sophisticated habit of perpetual tubbing falls into abeyance when one is in the grip of natural passions like rough travel or war. (But we must except Love.)

Towards sunset, following the young archaeologist's express recommendation, we went up to a little café on a sort of acropolis just above the river Peneus, and there beheld, in one gasp, the vision of absolute beauty we had travelled so far to seek. At our feet the river ; a few miles off, as it seemed, the snowy summits of Olympus, Ossa and Pelion ; between these and us a plain covered with shrubs and grass of a colour new to us, so young, so vivid, and yet so soft was the green. But the amazing thing was a middle-distance range on the right that appeared to rise suddenly out of the plain, only in Greece the light plays strange tricks. These intensely pink mountains, with odd blue, cavernous shadows that reminded one of the mountains in the moon as seen through a powerful telescope, might have been cut

out of cardboard, so sharp was the outline. In all our forty days' pilgrimage we saw nothing more ravishing than that scene: the brown and silver river, the salad-green plain, the terrifying pink cardboard range, and, behind all, those mountains of the sonorous, intoxicating names.

Presently we crossed the bridge, and walked along the river which here half encircles the town. We followed the creeks it throws out plainwards, and suddenly came upon an immemorial shepherd, crook and all, clad in shaggy skins, high leggings, and a cloak with a huge hood well over his face. He was admonishing and pleading with his sheep in a strange bored sing-song that had to my ears a faint echo of the Muezzin's call about it, but probably both derive from a more primitive source, since the Irish *caoine* has the same lilt. According to the conduct of the sheep the chant varied from tenderest cajolery to impassioned expostulation, but never rose above an undertone. It was hard to tear oneself away. When we re-crossed the bridge, two-wheeled country carts, each drawn by a pair of horses, were being driven across it at so furious a gallop that for a moment we thought this must be a revival of the Thessalian games; but it was simply peasants going home from market. I mention this incident because we saw nothing in the least like it anywhere else in Greece; and as I write it occurs to me that Thessaly was famous in classical times for horse-breeding; for

instance, the horses in the Elgin Marbles are said to be Thessalian. So perhaps after all what we saw on the bridge was a traditional style of covering the ground.

In order to reach the restaurant of the Panhellinion Hotel, you thread your way through a place full of whirring straps and wheels, and that night the dining-room, when reached, was in total darkness. We stumbled to a table and were begged in dumb show to have patience. We did so, and in due time, one by one, the gasoline lamps became incandescent and revealed the aristocracy of Larissa philosophically waiting for two of the main principals of life, food and light. What we chiefly remember are well-turned-out officers, first-rate wine, and a welcome intimation from the waiter that in that hotel lived a lady who could speak French. We had met a lady upstairs whom we took for a half-wit,—an enthusiast who had instantly conceived a passion for E., presented her with flowers, rapturously stroked her corn-coloured hair, and poured forth totally incomprehensible remarks in a strange tongue, in which something resembling a French word was occasionally caught. It appeared that this was the linguist. But presently in came a man who, much to his surprise, was pounced on by the waiter and dragged up to our table. He turned out to be a railway inspector, who not only really did speak French, but had a North Grecian time-table in his pocket. During the two days we spent at Larissa this gentleman was our help

and stay—a model of the quiet, persistent, chivalrous wish to help you, no matter at what trouble to self, which every soul who knows the Greeks of Greece will tell you is characteristic. And his wife, who also had a little French, but less than he, was equally kind.

Yet strange to relate, at a given moment I revealed to the inspector, with the aid of his own time-table, certain intricacies of travel on his own beat, and if you asked him about places in other parts of Greece —for instance, how long it takes to get from Patras to Kalamata—you might as well have been inquiring about railways in the Scotch Highlands. He told us many things that interested us, such as the fact that after the war Greece had increased geographically to twice her former size, and that whereas only 500,000 Turks were ejected, about 1½ million Greek refugees from Asia Minor and elsewhere had to be placed. Most of these were carpet-makers by trade—excellent workmen, too—and all of them commercial in their habits. But unfortunately what is wanted in Thessaly is agriculturists, and when these town-bred people were started with the Greek equivalent of three acres and a cow, they would promptly sell their agricultural outfit and make for the nearest town with a cinema. All this concerns what is the most pressing of all modern Greek problems, and its urgency accounts for the neglect of other pressing problems, such as the state of the roads round Athens, which renders motoring almost more of a pain than a pleasure.

The next day, carrying out the scheme declared by the aggravating Messrs. X. of London to be impossible, we went by rail to Tempe, accompanied by our kindly inspector, who was reconnoitring further up the line, but bade us look out for him in the return train, into which, after a walk through the Vale, we were to step at Gonos, the station between Tempe and Larissa. He informed us that an hour and a half should amply suffice for the whole business, including the double passage of the river Peneus by ferry—one at either end of the Vale. Having therefore, as we believed, heaps of time at our disposal, on leaving the train we settled down under a bush to a portable luncheon which consisted mainly of a mysterious little joint, dragged forth at the last moment from a dingy cupboard in the Panhellinion kitchen. It looked like the shoulder-blade of a child, and was one of the few bits of tender meat we lit on in Greece except in town restaurants. Thus refreshed we felt equal to entrusting our lives to the ferryman, and were gradually swept, torn, and bumped across the Peneus. This madly-rushing, dark brown river is, or can be, a terrifying stream to cross in a rickety ferry-boat; especially if you are alone in it with a boatman whose language you cannot speak, and of whom it is therefore useless to crave reassurance.

And now, comparing this and that, consulting our maps and so on, it was gradually borne in upon

us that a good five-mile walk had yet to be tackled, and that unless the train home was at least half an hour late we could not possibly catch it ; not at least if the second ferry was out of action, which we knew sometimes happened in rough weather, for that would mean an extra mile to hit off a railway bridge where one could cross. True, the authorities had wired to the inspector that both ferries were working, and as yet we had not learned by painful experience the exact value of such statements ; but the theory that one and a half hours would easily cover this whole expedition had shown us that it is useless to ask time-estimates even of an educated Greek. Hence we flew rather than walked through the Vale of Tempe.

It was too early in the year to appreciate to the full the marvel of the place, for the magnificent plane trees—and also the festoons of creepers that weave them together—were scarcely budding and the air was cool. But why that cleft, which would soon become an icy refuge from a parched and dusty world, has been sung by the poets all down the ages, we could nevertheless well understand. Whatever Hewlett may have done in 1914—for it was his account of Tempe that first fired our imaginations—we saw neither eagles nor tortoises ; perhaps at the pace we were going any that might have been about would have escaped our notice. Not so the famous laurels of which were woven the chaplets that crowned the victors in the Pythian games.

Every ninth year a sacred mission went forth from Delphi to gather branches of this shrub, some say because nowhere save in that gorgeous gash sacred to Apollo between Olympus and Ossa was it to be found. True, another legend relates that Apollo planted shoots of it near the Castalian spring at Delphi, but if so, why did the mission trouble to fetch branches from Tempe?

The exact nature of this festival, which always took place at the same time as the Daphnephoria (a Boeotian institution), seems obscure, but one thing is certain: the ancestors of those bushes we were now gazing at provided what was accounted the supreme honour in Ancient Greece! Think of it, fellow Greek maniac, and if you haven't been to Tempe, vow to go there before you die! Of course we broke off branches, and later on sent sprigs to a few friends of adequate distinction, such as Joyce Wethered, Neville Lytton, Vernon Lee, and the French poetess Anna de Noailles, who can boast of being a daughter of Greece herself in the female line. To this day there lurks in a certain trunk of mine a green-grey powder I am loth to expel, for it is sacred dust!

The rest of that expedition was rather a nightmare. The railway line runs through the valley, and presently we began to be haunted by phantom whistlings in the Tempe direction, and the prospect of spending twenty-four hours in a shed on a railway embankment. For the wind had been rising steadily, and it was

obvious that no ferry-boat would tackle the raging torrent Peneus had now become. Some distance ahead of us might be descried a shred of cobweb spanning it, and suddenly, from a cluster of hovels near the unthreadable complex of dykes and backwaters that lay between us and the river, up darted two little soldiers who, instead of forbidding pedestrians to use railway bridges, which for an agonised moment we thought was their intention, led us with smiles and encouraging gestures up the embankment. The beloved inspector, foreseeing the situation, had actually wired to Gonos about us, and this escort was the result !

I shall not easily forget the passage of that bridge. It was a cantilever erection innocent of handrails, and its floor consisted of iron planks laid lengthways, with huge gaps in between. Sometimes you could grab at cross portions of its anatomy, but there were recurring intervals of several yards when there was nothing to grab at. The wind was now blowing a gale, and below us, in loud yellow and white swirlings and roarings, raged Peneus. I never asked E., who was behind me, what her feelings were. For my part, in bygone days I fancied myself as a mountain climber with unshakable nerves ; but alas ! as the grandmother in *Punch* pensively remarked on once more meeting the beautiful Miss B. of her youth : " Of course forty years *do* make a difference in a girl ", and I confess that I did not quite like that Blondin experience. The two little soldiers faithfully followed in our wake ; had an acci-

dent happened, all they could have done would be to report the fact to the inspector; but we shall always regret that, not having recognised in them an appointed bodyguard, we gave them no tip.

About one-third of a mile off in the direction whence we had come, Gonos Station was now visible. We knew our train had not yet passed, and should it appear were quite prepared to do the Alcibiades trick and lay ourselves across the rails rather than be left behind. But as the men on the engine would probably be too busy talking to keep a good look-out, it seemed wiser to send on E. at the double in the now broiling heat, to hold it up at the station where it was due at 1 o'clock — the time being now 1.25! O foolish, incorrigible Western hustle! Arrived at the goal, parched, wineless, waterless, we stretched ourselves on the embankment and slept till 2.30, when the train came crawling in, bearing in its flanks the inspector, who seemed greatly relieved to see us. With one word he conjured up the wine and water our lavish flourishings of paper money had been powerless to produce, and needless to say there was heaps of time to drink it ere, with heavings and groanings, the train was once more under way for Larissa.

That evening, conversing with our benefactor, we first came upon a trait noted again and again later on, and which, like all travellers in a new country, we could not help fitting with a theory, the theory being that the modern Greek mind is recalcitrant to abstrac-

tions. The question, " Est-ce que les Grecs sont dévots ? " seemed to convey so little to our friend that we passed on for the moment to the weather and the crops ; but as the matter interested us we tackled it again later in a slightly different form by asking, " Est-ce que les Grecs sont religieux ? " Same result ! At last a still more carefully aimed shot hit the target ; the query, " Est-ce que les Grecs vont beaucoup à l'église ? " elicited the emphatic reply : " Oui ! oui ! beaucoup, beaucoup ", and one felt that to get still nearer the heart of the matter would be impossible in the land of Plato.

The fascination of Larissa lies mainly, I believe, in the proximity of Olympus—surely the most beautiful group of white domes eye can rest on. There are at least three mountains of that name, but none, I think, can equal this, the authentic Olympus of the *Iliad*, in beauty, in majesty, and above all in mystery. An uncomfortable feeling of sacrilege must surely beset one who scales these heights, and hard as the climber's passion dies, for once I scarcely regretted that for me that day is over. But who knows ? Perhaps it was a case of subconscious sour grapes !

FROM LARISSA, *VIA* METEORA, *TO* ATHENS

THE DAY after the Tempe expedition we cast off the Larissa spell very suddenly, because of the amazing complexities of Greek travel as revealed by the inspector's time-table—complexities which, however, were simplicity itself compared to what the real facts turned out to be. Partly in extenuation of the dragoman mania of Messrs. X., partly because the would-be Greek traveller must be told the worst, I will relate the whole most typically Greek story.

We wanted, as I said, to see the congeries of monasteries called Meteora—this in spite of Messrs. X.'s assurances that the country was infested with brigands; and as the distance from point to point is about forty miles, and as you travel by two railway lines that intersect at a junction called Demerli, we had imagined that to get to Trikala, the only place near Meteora that boasts an hotel, by an afternoon train would be a fairly simple proposition. On the contrary, at about 7 A.M. we realised that there was not a moment to be lost, routed the inspector out of his bed (I believe), accepted his offer to go down himself to the station to see if the 9 A.M. train " really would start " (!), echoed with deepest sincerity his regret that, being on duty

in the opposite direction, he could not see us off, and went back to our lightning packing. Luckily the cab-driver's style was the same we had admired on Larissa bridge, for, arrived at the station, we found out (1) that the 9 A.M. train, though supposed to correspond with the Trikala train, only does so in the time-table, never in real life; (2) that if we wanted to go to Trikala at all we must proceed full gallop to "*the other station*" (this was the first we had heard of tiny Larissa having two stations) and travel round by Volo, which meant two sides of a triangle. Imagine having all this brought home to you at the eleventh hour in an unknown language! Well, we just, and only just, caught this quite other train, which terrified me by heading north for Salonica, but, relenting, eventually swung round and sped due east towards Volo, the opposite direction to Trikala. We were told that food and wine could be got on the way, which was good news, for whatever the distance as the crow flies may be, as a Greek train flies the journey takes seven hours. The food, fragments of lamb impaled on sticks, turned out to be excellent, but no wine was to be had, and being still at the stage of artless credulity, we had taken none with us.

That journey across the big plain of Thessaly was full of interest, however, and a delightful French-speaking fellow-traveller told us the sort of things we wanted to hear; for instance, that our wonderful shepherd of Larissa and all the herdsmen of Thessaly, who,

by-the-by, are the only peasants we saw clad in national costume, are Wallachs, a half-nomad bilingual people who live in the mud beehive huts you saw grouped about everywhere, and are supposed to have come originally from Roumania. He told us too that wolves raid the plain in winter, hence the mud-walled pens we had noticed near all these settlements. Later on, when the train began running westwards from the coast, we gazed upon the scene of the battle of Pharsalia with the exact amount of deadness of spirit—as if the imagination had turned into dough—that the sight of battlefields produces in people who have no military knowledge. On the other hand, when the hills where Achilles and his myrmidons dwelt were pointed out to us, we were thrilled to the marrow, and our companion, who, like all Greeks, is passionately proud of his country's past, seemed gratified by our excitement.

Of Trikala, where we arrived about 10 P.M., I will only say we put up with it as a necessary part of the visit to Meteora. The place seemed to be in an uproar, but later on we found out that any Greek town you arrive at produces this impression. That is the way they live. The chief hotel—a very dingy edifice—regretted, in spite of the inspector's premonitory wire, to inform us that every room was taken; whereupon a most kindly English-speaking man emerged from the dense crowd on the pavement (our arrival seemed to convulse the whole town) and

led us to another still dingier hotel, where, after having opened and hastily re-closed various drawers in our bedrooms containing old hair combs, shaving brushes, and one or two quite unspeakable objects, we passed a disturbed night owing to the noise.

Next morning very early we went by train to Kalabaka, which is the station for Meteora and the present terminus of the line from Volo; a projected extension of it to the coast opposite Corfu, *via* Janina, may some day link up the fertile Thessalian plain with Western Europe. Our arrival at this horrible hamlet, from which, however, an adequate idea may be formed of the marvellous place Meteora is, saw the inauguration of a procedure which worked very well during the rest of our tour. E. was brilliant at tackling guards, telegraph clerks, and such like in fluent Greek constructed from modern phrase-books and Sophocles, but naturally less good, though full of optimism on the point, at grasping replies. Then I would come in with dramatic gesture and hasty drawings of desired objects, from eggs (very difficult these, as the Greeks use no egg-cups) to covered cars, which, E. objected, looked in my sketches like bath-chairs. On this occasion, brushing her "Oh, he quite understands!" aside, I drew for the benefit of a magnificent Wallach in rosetted slippers and petticoats who seemed willing to be our guide, a very poor portrait of himself and his mule. The mule was then scratched out with disgusted cries of

Staatliche Bildstelle, Berlin.

METEORA.

"No! no!" and the man pointed to with ecstasy of affirmation, only you had to try and remember that "né" means "yes", which is the last thing one would expect, and that the cheerful word "okki" does not mean "altro!" as you might imagine, but "no".

Meteora is a place that must be seen to be believed. Imagine four or five granite organs 1000 feet high welded into one, then torn asunder by an earthquake, groups of pipes still remaining intact, and bound together again in an irregular bundle like several bunches of asparagus of all sizes. Set the result up on end in a vast plain threaded by a silver and gold river (the Peneus fresh from the snows of Pindus), and you get Meteora. To clamber into the heart and round the upper precincts of this extraordinary place takes about four hours. At the top of the various groups of organ-pipes perch monasteries, to most of which no woman is admitted; but when our guide rang at the portal of one or two of these unpolluted establishments, out would come a monk with a tray bearing two glasses of very sweet liqueur, two of water, and two little dishes of jam, which of course we could not refuse, and for which drachmas were deposited on the tray. The drachma was then at 300 per £; E., as mathematician, was treasurer, and my belief is that whether the tips bestowed were a pound or a penny depended upon what greasy note came bulging out of her portfolio first. We were shown

one very fine chapel that glowed like what it was—a jewel-lined cave full of the gleaming glories of the Byzantine tradition, ikons and embroideries, lamps and mystery of darkness.

Finally we were conducted to the guest-monastery, from which the views, seen through rough windows hewn in the rock, were such that even the impassive, very Byzantine brother who was showing us round seemed awed by their beauty. He was a strange-looking creature, his long hair parted and waved in what used to be called "la grande double ondulation"; and his beard was divided into separate pointed strands, and trained across his breast like the lower spikes of a huge Star of India. If you had met him in private theatricals you would have scoffed at the idea of such wonderful grooming in a monastery. While we were waiting for dinner a couple of peasants clad in leather and skins and carrying guns rang the door bell and were admitted. They looked like stage gamekeepers, and we understood that they paid the monks toll in game for the shooting of the mountain.

The meal consisted of bean soup, bread, and a huge dish of olives, and our guide, who ate with us, spat his stones back into the dish. As far as I remember the coffee was quite drinkable, but the wine, of which we had heard great things, seemed to be raspberry vinegar toned up with snuff.

And now the hour was about to strike of our one

bitter failure and humiliation, concerning which the Great Power subsequently remarked: "If you had then known me this should not have happened", and I quite believe him. We had with us a bit of writing drawn up by the Larissa inspector, stating that our chief object in coming to Meteora was to visit one of certain monasteries so inaccessibly placed that would-be visitors have to be drawn up in baskets, and our guide gave us to understand that this experience was to be part of our homeward tramp. Arrived below the platform some 200 feet above us from which the basket should descend, a bell was rung, and it soon became evident that there was a hitch somewhere, though of what nature we of course could not understand. Perhaps it was one of the all-male monasteries and our guide unequal to explaining that we had no wish to go in, only to be hauled up (and, I presume, have some more liqueur and raspberry jam); perhaps the ropes and pulleys were out of repair. Anyhow there it was, and an endless argument ensued, carried on with whinings and grumblings from above and infuriated expostulation from below. Suddenly we recollected that these realms are outside the dominion of the clock. . . . ! The thought of spending twenty-four hours in Kalabaka might well daunt anybody; moreover, we had settled to pass the night at a place called Karditza, half-way between Meteora and the junction for Athens, chiefly because the dear, simple inspector had given

us to understand that the Karditza Hotel rivals the Ritz in comfort; for in naming it he had drawn in his breath and raised his hands and eyes—a gesture wherewith the Greek indicates glories past describing. We therefore put an end to the discussion by beginning the descent, but throughout that walk a stentorian trio of mutual recrimination between the two monks and our guide shook the mountain. Arrived at the station, we as usual composed ourselves to sleep on the embankment till the train felt equal to starting, which happened an hour and a half after the advertised time.

I have seen one place that Karditza vividly recalled to my mind, a filthy village at the back of Etna called Randazzo, that has ever been celebrated for the quantities of children and black pigs produced there —the latter a fierce breed of huge, lean, bristly porkers who still come hurtling full gallop down precipitous side alleys and sweep your legs from under you. In past days it was a habit of harassed mothers to throw superfluous babies to the pigs, and my then travelling companion, Miss E. Œ. Somerville, unable to paint in peace owing to the horrible manners of the Randazzo children, was loud in lament over the decadence of good old customs. The dirt and squalor of Karditza—an ill-planned industrial town built on a marsh —the jeering comments of the aged, the savage intrusive bearing of the young men and maidens—all

this was unlike anything met with in Greece throughout our tour, and there was a moment towards evening when we went for a group of detestable children with our sticks and scattered them. They were very bad shots with stones, so all was well.

The famous hotel turned out to be a pretentious, plush-lined, stucco palace covered with appalling decorative *motifs* and crowned by a gigantic dome. Afternoon tea, served in a huge bare café to the sound of astonishing fireworks executed on the cracked piano by a stray traveller, filled us with hope, for it consisted of butter—a thing almost unknown outside Athens—marmalade, and white bread. On the other hand, the bedrooms, each furnished with two beds, one chair, and scarcely any other furniture, rather shook us. We had ordered dinner for 7 P.M. in the restaurant, which turned out to be another huge room just like the café, only be-hung with brewers' advertisements and mercifully *minus* piano. A wait of forty-five minutes elapsed, during which time all we could do was begin on a bottle of really good wine; no bread, no bell, no response to our spirit-rappings; only two men sipping beer at a table a mile off, and noting our fruitless efforts to attract attention with surprise and pity. At last appeared odd hunks of the eternal lamb, and instead of potatoes and greens, a vegetable-dish full of hot buttered toast; and that was the whole dinner at this Greek Ritz. Next morning our breakfast consisted of two eggs each, besides

tea, butter, and bread, and we carried off with us, for consumption in the train, six hard-boiled eggs (no more lamb to be had, thank goodness), bread, a bottle of water, and one of wine. As this was by far the biggest hotel bill we ever had to pay except in Athens, it is worth while saying that, including carriage to and from the station, it amounted to 260 drachmas, about 18s. Under the aegis of the Great Power it would probably have been less by a third ; even that, considering the value given, would have been a most extortionate charge.

By now we had some experience of Greek hotels, and as it would not be fair to dilate only on the joys of Grecian travel, let me handle a natural matter naturally and say, once for all, that as regards a certain department of life its horrors cannot be exaggerated. Greece is a waterless country, or at least there is no organised water-supply, and the results must be faced as you face crossing the Channel, or any other hateful experience. In the Peloponnesian villages we stayed at later on, the hillside is considered good enough ; as a matter of fact it is of course far better ; but of all the hotels we patronised, the pretentious stucco edifice at Karditza got the worst marks, both in this and every other particular except afternoon tea.

We boarded the train for Athens, or rather for the junction Demerli, thinking with dread of what might happen there, wondering if we were now to learn that

no trains ever connect anywhere in Greece except in theory. The inspector had given us an engaging account of Demerli ; all you had to do was hop out of train No. 1, swarm up a rather steep embankment (" mais il y a une espèce d'escalier "), run along a road, drop down another embankment and board train No. 2, the Athens train, which should be due in about twenty minutes. Alas ! by now we had completely lost faith in the pronouncements of officials, who, to their credit be it said, advanced them without any show of conviction ; and the real question was, which of the trains would be two hours, which only one hour late. Mercifully the Athens train, having the longer run to negotiate, won the prize for unpunctuality, and we stepped into it with a sense of relief and pleasant anticipation; for our lives had been so packed with incident that we were actually looking forward to fourteen hours in a railway carriage as a sort of rest cure.

Greece is not only, as I said before, an undeveloped country, but a country in a state of flux ; and the very absence of commercial hustle which makes it a paradise for travellers like E. and me, has for result, that when canals silt up, or sections of railway line are carried away by torrents, no one either takes the matter tragically or applies hasty remedies. This, again, not unnaturally produces in the minds of officials a degree of vagueness as to what will happen next week, or

even to-morrow, that infuses more uncertainty into one's plans of travel than is pleasurable. And if up to now, thanks to E.'s quickness and my tenacity in cross-questioning, we had always saved ourselves and our seven packages at the last moment from wrong trains, wrong stations, and general chaos, there is no denying that our course had been a continuous passage from shock to shatteration. Had we known before starting of the existence of the Great Power all this might have been avoided; but on the whole I think we both rather enjoyed pulling off this difficult bit of our trip quite by ourselves, and in spite of Messrs. X. and their pet word " impossible ".

I cannot remember in obedience to what high ideal we had decided to travel second class during the whole of this Meteora expedition; but once again on the main line, reassuming at Demerli the state to which our through tickets gave us a right, we found ourselves in an empty first-class compartment furnished with a delightful observation gallery, our aristocratic repose being somewhat marred by constant bleatings from the horse-box immediately behind us. Easter was close at hand, which accounts for our having so far met nothing in the way of meat save lamb, and these poor victims were on their way to assist after their fashion in the Athens Paschal celebrations. Greece being a democratic country, perhaps they were tacked on to the one first-class coach with a vague idea of toning down its glories.

Throughout this section of our tour, although of course " on haunted holy ground ", we had seen no classical remains, and were quite satisfied to have been passing through landscape of a colour and texture quite unlike anything we had known elsewhere. But now we braced ourselves to meet the shock of a very definite thrill, for at one point the Pass of Thermopylae is visible from the train ! We had felt certain of not missing it, and were still standing hopefully in the gallery, finger on map, eyes gazing seawards, when it became obvious that some one had blundered. This is the sort of occasion on which to recall a sensible German saying : " Schwamm d'rüber ! " which means, " Pass the sponge over the slate ".

The only other incident I can recall is the entry into our carriage of a very grand young Israelite, all jewelry and glistening suit-cases, accompanied by his Mama, a quite simple Greek peasant with a string bag containing a leek or two, an orange, and some bread. Aware that if ever there was a first-class passenger by divine right it was he, the young man addressed himself in English with some gallantry to my niece. They say that travel reveals character ; certainly I should never have believed the polite, accessible E. capable of frigidity such as was evoked by that poor young man's well-meant advances. He was obviously a kind fellow, attentive to and not in the least ashamed of his mother, who would, I am certain, have been far happier in a third-class carriage, or even in the

horse-box with the Paschal victims, whose voices rose lam(b)entably above the din at every station we stopped at. She never took her adoring eyes off him, and when at last, his vitality no doubt impaired by E.'s behaviour, he dropped off to sleep, she removed her shawl and gently tucked it round him, specially safeguarding the fold upon fold of fat neck. And thus she sat, motionless and worshipping, till we reached Athens.

We had wired to Messrs. X.'s agent to expect us, and were met at the station by a kind gentleman-like young man in Oxford trousers who escorted us to our hotel. In order to finish once and for ever with Messrs. X., I will add that next day I cashed a cheque for monies owed me by them, and expressed myself freely about the wire to the young man. He said he knew nothing about it; his chief had done the deed, which certainly was " very silly ". This airy view went well with the fluttering Oxford garments but not with the mood of his interlocutor, who exclaimed " *Silly?* why, it was barely *honest*! " He seemed a really nice fellow, and expressed a hope that the future of our relations would make up for the past. But needless to say that chapter was closed. We now knew what was the proper course to pursue, and never saw our young friend or his office again. Meanwhile it is worth mentioning that that morning we had peacefully fixed the price of our pension at the hotel at 250 drachmas per

diem, London and Athens having quoted 300 as the lowest possible figure! Also we were told officially that though the taxi-men would ask 100 drachmas, 50 was quite enough. Finding out that the legal fare is 25, we gave them that sum, *plus* a small tip, and they were quite satisfied. So much for expert aid!

An employee of a certain tourist agency, who must long since have been sacked for guilelessness, once said to me: "Of course it *is* in our interest to make our clients spend as much money all round as possible". Commercial methods being a sealed book to me I made no comment on this remark, in which the words "all round" are particularly baffling. But I still wonder, at intervals, if this is sound policy.

ATHENS, MARATHON, SUNION, *AND* DELPHI

THE OBJECT of this record being to encourage a certain kind of traveller to embark on a certain kind of tour in the less known parts of Greece, I will not say much about Athens. It would be an impertinence for such as me to trifle with a task which should only be attempted by an historian, a classical scholar, and a poet rolled into one (and even he must first purge himself of pedantry and pontificalism)—in short, by people such as J. Addington Symons, Professor Gilbert Murray, Vernon Lee, Barrès, or Goethe, that great Grecian who never saw Greece. Still there is no harm in jotting down a few humble impressions.

The least expert haunter of such places must surely feel the difference between other museums and those of Athens, which contain hardly anything but masterpieces exhumed on or near the spot where they took life. You may not be a connoisseur, but in presence of original marbles undishonoured by the proximity of even excellent copies, your eye becomes cleansed and sharpened, and you see as you never saw before. Nothing, I think, can wrench one more violently out of the present than that roomful of archaic Athena

Archaic Statue of Athena, Acropolis Museum, Athens.
(Fratelli Alinari, Florence.)

statues, high-bosomed and inscrutably smiling, now mere museum pieces on the Acropolis where once they fashioned destiny. Surely John Knox himself would shrink from the thought of the stone company on the roof of St. John Lateran coming to be nothing but specimens of Christian sculpture in some collection in the heart of Africa, or wherever the next civilisation is going to spring up ! There has been much discussion as to whether these votive statues represent the goddess or the worshipper, but as the disagreement of doctors is unanimity compared to that of archaeologists, one is free to adopt the theory one prefers. In any case the plight of dethroned Athena poignantly affected E. and me.

The national indifference to organisation is nowhere more manifest than in these magnificent museums, where the insane numbering of the exhibits seriously interferes with one's pleasure. For instance, the numbers on a given shelf or wall run 1325, 72, 125, 1, 1470, and so on ; and as in such poor catalogues as there are nothing is put down numerically, and as they shift the exhibits from room to room every three months or so, often giving two numbers to each, the result on the temper of the painstaking and earnest-minded admirer of the Beautiful can be imagined. It is provoking, too, that these cool resorts should be closed, as are all the shops, between twelve and three,—just the time when no one is in the mood for constitutionals.

As regards the Acropolis itself I could never get over the hateful existence of the modern town all round it, and think that at Paestum, in its solitude beside the sea with the noble mountain-line behind it, I have drunk deeper draughts of joy. The Great Power, now about to step into these pages, has issued a folded sketch-map with pictures entitled " The Archaeological Greece " ; and the letterpress, also in English but without stops, informs us that " in Athens a new life is springing up from the marvellous Greek wit as well as from the ancient civilisation as a great impulse of the same ancient and vivifying Greek spirit ". I quite believe all I gather from this paragraph ; meanwhile to people with delicate ears a stay in Athens is torture. For some reason this roughly-paved town is a vast sounding-board which the ever-prevalent dust fails to deaden, and like all Southern Europeans the Greek not only loves noise but never stops making it. In short, " the new life " above referred to is " springing up " all night as well as all day, consequently Athens and a good night's rest are incompatible terms. The car and tram drivers seem to take their hooters as a child does its rattle, for a delightful toy that may sometimes serve the further purpose of attracting some one's attention ; consequently they never stop hooting. To complete the agony, when modern ideas of traffic first reached Athens a few years ago, some bright person made a corner in hooters, and persuaded the authorities to

insist on their all hooting the same note. I cannot quite account for the almost unbearably irritating effect of this unison—yet, after all, I can. Fancy living in a wood with no birds in it but hysterical cuckoos. Well, that would be exactly the same sort of thing, and I shall never forget the hideous sound of that massed band of unison motor horns as heard from the top of Lycabettus, the fantastic rock that rises up out of Athens like a lighthouse. Apart from this drawback and the appalling state of the roads, the town, which takes on beautiful colours at sunset, is alive and sympathetic, and the inhabitants conspicuously friendly.

We did not at once look up our Belgrade acquaintances the Woodleys, simply because our luggage, sent on of course from the frontier, had not yet arrived; and as any one can guess, given the adventures of the past few days, we were by no means looking our best, and shrank from imperilling the favourable impression which, in spite of the warning incident of the Larissa landlord and the young archaeologist, we could not help hoping we had made. But bearing Mr. Woodley's advice in mind we went straight to the office of him to whom I have hitherto alluded as the Great Power, and who, as I now found noted in my pocket-book, had already been extolled as the traveller's one and only hope by a girl I had met in England a few days before we started. She

had just come back from Greece, was absolutely intoxicated with its beauty, and dashed by the acute boredom depicted on the countenances of all her friends whenever she mentioned the subject. How well I remembered a friend of my own, Maurice Baring, saying to me years ago, after my first sight of Paestum: "Do you know, we all wish you'd never gone there!" Hence I believe Miss P. was speaking the truth when she assured me by letter that it would be the greatest relief to pour her experiences into willing ears, even those of a complete stranger like myself; and she had spent an afternoon with me in the country doing so.

The firm the great man personifies is styled Ghiolman Brothers, Tourist Agents, Place de la Constitution, Athens, and let me say at once that any one who wishes to travel Greece on the sort of lines that appealed to E. and me should not trouble London at all but simply write to Messrs. Ghiolman, state his ideas and desires, and let him work them out. There are two brothers Ghiolman, but the one we secretly called Napoleon is the real driving power. He once told me that naturally he knew a thing or two about his country, having been present at the battle of Marathon. Judging by his name you might have thought the siege of Jerusalem would have been nearer the mark, but there was no trace of Israel in the swarthy, powerful, clean-cut face that confronted you on the other side of the pigeon-hole.

I think I mentioned that to me, whose passion is geography and dreams of travel, fell the task of roughing out our various expeditions. Now Ghiolman, though a very exceptional person, is slightly tinged with the characteristics of his kind, such as a preference for the line of least resistance in the matter of plan-making, and a preconceived notion that nine out of ten tourists are born fools. He began life as a dragoman, knows every stick and stone in Greece, and has an iron will; on the other hand, I, who of course did not know the ropes, was also not lacking in determination; further, I had pored over maps and guide-books, and had excellent reasons, of which he knew nothing, for wishing to do things, *if possible*, on such and such lines. Hence our early discussions, from which E. declared I used to emerge pale and shattered, were wrestling bouts compared to which Jacob's affair with the angel was child's-play. In the end, however, each came to recognise in the other an opponent worthy of the best Toledo steel—or rather the moment arrived when we worked together like a pair of well-broken old-fashioned phaeton horses; he coming to perceive that I was not a foolish female crying for the moon, and I, on my side, finding out that if he said it was impossible for us to get to Delphi by sea, "unless, like Apollo, you can turn yourselves into dolphins" (a classical allusion I did not understand at the time), it was *not*, as I half suspected, because that trip requires intricate organ-

isation, but because the Isthmus of Corinth really and truly was under repair, having as usual fallen in. In short, the more we had to do with him the higher rose our esteem for Ghiolman ; and though to repeat compliments is the last infirmity of ignoble minds, I cannot help saying that when E. informed me of a certain confidential remark of his (which, it now occurs to me, admits of more than one interpretation), to the effect that he had never met a woman like her aunt, I was dumb with gratification ; for truth to tell it really does take some courage to stand up to Ghiolman.

That evening, a tour to Delphi having been arranged, the lines of a further tour—the most glorious part of our forty days of travel—roughly indicated, and above all, our boxes being at last to hand, we called upon the Woodleys, who throughout our stay in Athens behaved as if they had nothing on earth to do but study our pleasure. They took us in their car to Marathon, an expedition on which the unique beauty of the situation of Athens reveals itself—mountains on three sides, and behind you the sea. Pentelicon, womb of so many cities and works of art, seems almost untouched by time ; hardly a scratch is to be seen on its surface ; and Mr. Woodley told us of some American, who, having remarked that if the mountain were dumped down in America it would be worked out in a very short time, was staggered

on learning certain facts about its cubic content and took back his words, for Pentelicon is practically inexhaustible.

As we climbed up the celebrated mound at Marathon, a real inspiration came to me as how to deal with the swarms of children who, regardless of the fact that the plain is one mass of wild flowers, persist in pursuing visitors with bouquets. As they approached, each one trying to outrun the others, I myself hastily plucked a bouquet and presented it with beaming smiles and floods of English to an elect tormentor, with the result that, baffled, and I think terrified, the whole band retired and left us in peace. People with a perhaps dangerous lunatic in their train had better be avoided. I make a present of this tactic, which was successfully employed on other occasions, to any traveller heartless enough to use it.

We lunched at a capital little restaurant, established partly at Mr. Woodley's initiative in a glorious wood by the sea, and wound up with a drive to Eleusis. Sad to say, scarcely a trace is left of the grove that so persistently haunts readers of Oedipus in Colonus ; it is little better than a suburban group of dusty olives, and Ilissos, the " clear transparent " stream in which Socrates and Phaedrus walked barefoot, is now a mere trickle in a dirty ditch. But the Byzantine church at Daphne satisfied even eyes fresh from the glories of Meteora, and on the bay of Eleusis, behind Salamis, Demeter arranged a sunset for us

which, coupled with the associations of the place, we shall remember as long as we live. Every human being who has eyes to see, and imagination to fan the flame within, knows such moments—high lights, whether the rest of the canvas be drab or gay.

Another time the Woodleys took us to Sunion, a place I had always longed with particular fervour to see, because it connects in the mind with all the epitaphs one has ever read of drowned Greek sailors.[1] The first thing a homeward-bound ship in distress would look for is that temple to Poseidon, high on the extreme southern point of Attica, and one divines what it stood for in the lives of these bold, capable mariners, whose loathing of the trade imposed on them by destiny may perhaps have contributed unawares to the collapse of the Hellenic empire.

Be that as it may, nothing, I think, contrasts more strangely with the note struck in our own sea-poetry than the Greek detestation of the sea. Take, among many others breathing the same spirit, that most glorious of our sixteenth-century sea songs, " Hey nonny no ", of which one strophe is :

> Is't not fine
> To swim in wine
> And turn upon the toe,

[1] All, from Sophocles to Byron, agree that the view of Sunion from the sea is incomparably the finest, but no photograph gives an adequate idea of the high rocky promontory the temple crowns.

E. Wasmuth, Berlin.

BYZANTINE CHURCH AT DAPHNE, NEAR ATHENS.

And sing Hey nonny no
When the winds blow
And the seas flow!

Then turn to the Greek epitaphs! "O happy shepherd!" runs one of them, "would that I too had shepherded on the mountain, along this white hill, rather than have dipped a ship's rudder in the bitter brine!" Another sailor, buried on the beach, complains that not even in death can he "forget the sleepless shores; for lying beneath the spray-beaten reefs, for ever do I wretchedly hear, even among the dead, the hated thunder of the sea". And a third tells how his corpse was found on the shore by Leontichus, another seaman, who buried him, "shedding tears for his own calamitous life; for neither is he at peace, but flits like a gull over the ocean!"

These tragic associations which cluster round Sunion are further, and most peacefully, enshrined for me (as they will be henceforth for E., for there was a piano at Delphi) in one of the sublimest invocations ever addressed to any god: "A Sailor's Song to the Dioscuri", by Schubert. I find it difficult to rightly appraise words which, allied to certain music, and evoking certain visions, have been part of one's life since time immemorial. Thus it is with the words —German, of course—of the Dioscuri hymn, which seem to me direct, homely, and exactly right. On the other hand, it may be owing to the ineffable quiet entrance of the dominant (if I may speak for one

moment as a musician to other music lovers)—it may be, I say, because of that calm chord, thrice reiterated, which ushers in the third line of the second strophe, that even to-day I cannot attempt a translation of it with quite a cool heart. The sense of the verse is, more or less :

> Even to one who, strong and stablished in himself,
> Faces the tempest without fear,
> The benediction of your rays
> Gives triple courage.

Something in these lines, perhaps the " benediction " of the rays, suddenly reminds one that the heavenly twins were Helen's brothers.

I speak of these things in order to account for the fact that, whereas the spearhead of most people's longing for Greece is the Parthenon, for me, who am under the dominion of yet another passion, the sea, it has always been Sunion. Alas ! that I should have been doomed to see it through icy rain that fell almost continuously from a grey sky into a tumbled wash of grey waters ! But, just for a second, there appeared between the dazzling white columns a patch of still more dazzling blue, and one could imagine what the magic of the place must be under happier conditions.

We visited the so-called Museum, like many local " Museums " in Greece just a shed, but this time only a tool-shed ; and Mr. Woodley gave me as souvenir a coin with Athena's owl on it, the turning out of specie having been one of the chief industries of the mines

Poseidon Temple at Sunion.
(Collection M. Z., Athens.)

at Laurion hard by. E. was presented with a hideously grimacing tragic mask which was declared by the curator of the tool-shed to be " a portrait of Sappho, poetess ". I could not help thinking of my honoured friend Anna de Noailles, who takes a frank and disarming pleasure in her own personal charms, and wondered whether some two and a half thousand years hence a similar libel will be perpetrated upon her.

We had a delightful meal just below the temple in a peasant's house where, as everywhere we went, our friends seemed to be particularly cherished guests. As for Laurion, nothing but the extreme beauty of its inhabitants differentiates it from any sordid mining village in Wales. The state of that particular road does really and truly beggar description; but in spite of dislocated neck and deadened tympanum (for our friends' chauffeur never stopped hooting whether or no impedimenta were in sight, and I knew them too little then to beg for mercy), we never blessed the Woodleys' car more fervently than on that occasion, for to get to Sunion and back from Athens by rail and tramway takes, I believe, several days.

One of the worst sore throats I remember was the result of this excursion, notwithstanding which we started next day, as usual at cockcrow, for Delphi, going back part of the way we had already travelled as far as Brala. Here terminates a magnificent road built by the Allies during the war for the transfer of

troops from Itea, the port of Delphi, to Salonica, whereby the journey was curtailed and the submarine-infested Aegean Sea avoided. From Brala a Ghiolman motor-car took us on to Delphi, where the hotel much lauded by some of our friends did not quite come up to expectations. As everywhere, even after Ghiolman's aegis protected us, we had to fight hard for two single rooms, and I shall not soon forget the amazed face of the servant as she ejaculated: "What! a towel each?!" Again, why were we given dark brown syrup instead of the exquisite pale yellow Hymettus honey of Athens? Here, at least, is one reality that more than comes up to the dream! Let me say that no one who has not visited that vast rock-garden, Greece, knows what wild flowers can be; but the bees know, and the result of that incomparable florison is Hymettus honey.

A pernicious sore throat interferes with aesthetic enjoyment, especially if, confusing your bottles of alleviating drugs, you paint your larynx with raw lysol, and in consequence can hardly speak, let alone swallow. Still, Delphi too comes very near realising the vision invoked by its name. As regards what "The Archaeological Greece" calls "its ruins and arounds", the former must of course thrill the archaeologist, but they say little to such as E. and me, who depend mainly on the eye. The "arounds", however, are as imposing and terrific as the well-known stanzas in Milton's "Hymn to the Nativity" in which Apollo and his

shrine are faithfully dealt with ; and after the pastoral approach through the plain of Itea—a vast forest of immemorial, ever-fruitful olive trees that one tribe has endeavoured to wrest from another all down history—the gorge of Delphi is simply staggering. I was ill and insensitive when I saw it, so can speak with authority.

What chiefly struck us in the museum was of course the famous Charioteer—his face, as Maurice Baring remarks somewhere, so exactly the face of that now extinct genus the hansom-cab driver. Yet I always feel about bronzes that good casts are just as impressive as originals, though possibly if one saw them side by side, even the eye of ignorance might detect a difference. After the Charioteer what we best remember is the curator, an aged man, more bored, more desperately hard up for something to do, and if possible, something that should secure him a tip, than any Greek curator I ever saw, and that is saying a good deal. He trampled up and down that very resounding building pretending to look for something ; he unlocked cases and took out exhibits, to replace them presently on exactly the same spot, with a loud bang of the glass door. And all the perfumes of Araby could not have triumphed over the perfume of that old man, who, haunted by the hope of hitting upon some tip-worthy device, was unable to tear himself from our vicinity. At last, stepping out on to the balcony, he spied and hailed a friend, like unto himself in every

detail, and presently four trampling feet were waking the echoes in that noisiest of museums.

Next day I was better and mounted a mule, E. walking, to explore the slopes of Parnassus in hopes of getting a sight of the summit. Probably we had done so from the other side on our way down to Athens, for the weather was brilliant just then, but the foreshortening of the range rendered identification difficult, and E. would not hear of my waking up her Jewish admirer to make inquiries. It appears that nine days out of ten Parnassus shrouds itself in mist, so we were not too bitterly disappointed at having to concentrate on the glories of the view across the Gulf of Corinth, where lay the bourne of our most ardent desires. Hitherto, with a perfect day thrown in now and again to keep up our spirits, the weather had been pretty vile, but one blessed consequence of this was that the Peloponnesian mountain ranges were capped with snow. I may mention in passing that on Parnassus, as on the few other sites regularly frequented by tourists, the children nuisance broke out again in its most acute form, and that flowery offerings pressed upon them had the same dispersing effect as at Marathon.

Towards evening I got better still, and then and there pulled off one of the most poignant literary joys of my life. By good luck, as the classical student will already have gathered from a former remark, I had never read the Homeric Hymns, and without

knowing this my friend Vernon Lee had sent me just before we started her own copy—a delightful edition edited by H. Evelyn-White (Heinemann), including Hesiod—on one page of which is an excellent translation, and on the other the original. Will any one who recollects the Hymn to the Pythian Apollo imagine what it was to read for the first time *at Delphi* how the god, changing himself into a dolphin, leaped out of the stormy sea on to the deck of a piratical Cretan trader's ship that was beating up the western coast of the Peloponnesus; how the crew, finding she would not obey the helm, guessed that this was no earthly visitant, and cowered together in the stern; how the ship, driven by a sudden west wind, turned into the quiet waters of the Corinthian Gulf and touched land at Itea, where the god, assuming his own form, bade these sailors forget their wives, children, and home, for they would never see them again, being henceforth consecrate to his service as priests of the new shrine he was about to found. And then, with music and dancing, he led them through the olive groves up to Delphi. In the Acropolis Museum there is a certain slab—part of an exquisite frieze which I like to think may have been inspired by this hymn; a procession of forms moving from right to left, their feet scarcely touching the ground, in their hands and at their lips instruments of music. When we were in Athens it was on the right as you come in, but goodness knows where it is now!

As we passed through the plain on our homeward way, olive-harvesting was in full swing, and the blue-green light in that vast orchard mystically illumined everything it fell on—carts, white mules, camels, and peasants of striking beauty: the men high up in the trees shaking the boughs, the women below, garnering the fruit in their white aprons; a picture of ineffable charm laved by a stream of uninterrupted talk. Farther on we noticed with sorrow that at many places that fine piece of engineering, the Itea-Brala road, is falling out of repair, watercourses being allowed to work their will. This time there were Germans on board. I well know and am deeply attached to this people, by no means only owing to music and Goethe. It is quite as easy to point out their faults as it is, no doubt, for them to point out ours, or for critics to pick holes in works of art; but nothing will ever change my fundamental respect and admiration for our late enemy—a nation that has innate love for hard work and noble music, and is therefore founded on a rock. All the same, as we raced down that road made by the Allies and passed the little cemetery that lies at the spot where it joins the plain, I could not help saying in thought to our fellow-travellers: "Ah ha! I wonder if you guessed we would do that!"

FROM ATHENS, *VIA* MYKENE, TIRYNS, *AND* NAUPLIA, *TO* SPARTA

ON APRIL 13 we started on our tour in the Peloponnesus, receiving from Mr. Ghiolman on the evening before our departure a cast-iron programme which represented the boiling-down of my rough sketch, and was entitled: "Twelve days' tour from Athens to Mycenae, Argos, Tiryns, Nauplia, Epidauros, Tripolitza, Sparta, Mistra, Tripi, Langada, Mont Taygetos, Kalamata, Messene (if desired), Diavolitzi, Andritsaena, Bassae, Olympia, Diacofto, Megaspeleion, Corinth, Acro-Corinth, and back to Athens". Read at one gasp it certainly looked a formidable undertaking, and an archaeologist of our acquaintance, fonder, perhaps, like his prototype the badger, of digging than walking, ejaculated on seeing it: "Good Lord! you can't possibly pull off all that!" As proof of the infallibility of Ghiolman let me say that we pulled it off, so to speak, on our heads, an expression which I hope may be overlooked in consideration of the fact that once or twice, as regards myself, it can be taken in a literal sense.

Our final duel with the great man must be recorded, because I wish to prepare the minds of the many who I hope will put themselves into his hands

for what will doubtless happen in their own case. And let me point out that these duels are carried on in circumstances unfairly favourable to Ghiolman, who is entrenched with his secretary behind a pigeon-hole, and after each lapidary pronouncement withdraws from view, and goes on dictating in a rapid undertone from thin documents which require a good deal of thumb-licking to separate from each other.

Meanwhile you stand helpless on the wrong side of the barrier awaiting his pleasure.

This time the dialogue was more or less as follows. After appalled examination of his programme I rapped at the pigeon-hole and the head reappeared.

G. What is it, Madame?

E. S. Mr. Ghiolman, I can't possibly do this programme; it is far too exhausting.

G. I say you *can*, Madame! Excuse me one moment! (*lick*, *disappearance*, *murmurings*).

E. S. (*again rapping*). Mr. Ghiolman, I tell you I can't! Look at this, "*Tuesday*, 12 hours; *Wednesday*, get up at 5 A.M. . . . 13 hours!" I'm not a young woman, and I simply can't do it.

G. Madame, I tell you you *can* do it; English ladies have a great spirit! . . . Excuse me one moment! (*lick*, *disappearance*, *murmurings*).

E. S. (*rapping again after a pause*). Mr. Ghiolman, I may have a great spirit but I also have chronic lumbago.

E. (*interposing*). My aunt was really ill at Delphi and still has a very bad throat. I don't believe she ought to start at all.

G. On the contrary, she should start at once; this tour will make her well. Excuse me one moment, Madame (*business as before*).

E. and I looked at each other and laughed. Finally I rapped once more, very slowly and firmly, and said: "Mr. Ghiolman, you *must* listen, please. I want to know why you are so sure I can do this trip. *What are you going on?*" He replied with emphasis: "The air"; and, at last abandoning his Jack-in-the box methods, he explained that something in the quality of that air, coupled with the life we should be leading, doubles and triples the strength of all who breathe it; he had seen it happen again and again, and could judge the powers of his clients at a glance. Of course I could consult a doctor if I chose, but any sensible *Greek* doctor would say "go". After this we both felt he really did know what he was talking about; no doctor was consulted, and the event, as I said before, proved Ghiolman's prescience.

I think I will quote the whole of the first day's programme, just to give an idea of the care with which the tour was organised.

"1*st day*, *Monday*, *April* 13.—Leave Athens hotel 6 A.M. by carriage for Peloponnesus rail station, to take there the 6.40 A.M. train arriving Mycenae 12.22 A.M.

Leave the train here and take the special automobile which will be waiting to motor up to the ruins of Mycenae (twenty minutes), visiting there the tombs of Agamemnon and Klytemnestra, the Lions' Gate, and the wind-swept Acropolis. The view from the top of Acropolis is superb over the plain of Argolis and the distant mountains. Motor after to Nauplia *via* Argos and Tiryns. At Tiryns a stop will be made for visiting there the interesting Cyclopean Walls, the foundations of the palace, and the subterranean galleries. Luncheons should be brought from Athens hotel to be eaten by Lions' Gate. At Nauplia Hôtel Grande-Bretagne for dinner and spend the night."

Note how every detail is thought out, even to the exact blade of grass on which " luncheons " were to be eaten, and how at the right moment a discreet fillip is given to the imagination. Our whole programme was drawn up on similar lines, and when, as sometimes happened, we ventured to choose our own feeding-place, it was in spite of agitated remonstrance from our keepers, chauffeurs or muleteers as the case may be. Ghiolman has cast his shoe over the whole of Greece, and his minions consider that his slightest orders are to be obeyed to the letter.

The distance from Athens to Mykene is only about thirty miles, but, as may be seen above, the train takes five and a half hours to do it. When we started the weather was cold and ugly, but there was plenty of time for it to mend, and mend it did long before

we got to Mykene Station, where a Ford car—one of the first, I should think, ever constructed—met us and deposited us near the site of Schliemann's excavations. This wonderful place is too well known to need description here, so I will only remark that we had the luck to see the gorgeous landscape which unfolded itself from the Acropolis in startling, after-rain brilliance. But I wonder if other people have had an experience that was vouchsafed us that day, an impression as weird and poignant as anything I can recall.

It will be remembered that the Atreus Treasure House, also called Agamemnon's Tomb (of which a fine photograph can be seen in the British Museum), is built in the shape of a gigantic beehive in the heart of the hill, open just over the portal to the outer air ; and as wild flowers rage with peculiar violence about ruins, the hill was alive with bees who were too deeply engrossed in their exquisite industry to bother about us. Well, as we stood inside the tomb, a strange, solemn note became audible ; at first one could not conceive what it was or whence it came, but as the eye accustomed itself to the twilight you saw thousands upon thousands of bees circling round the extreme top of the dome. These were the musicians. Their music was more unearthly, more suggestive of things immemorial, more suspensive of common, everyday life than my weak words can convey. It was the soul of the past become sound.

We now proceeded to Tiryns; it would hardly have been possible to do otherwise, being, so to speak, on the spot, but this huge rubbish-heap, dear beyond all similar heaps to the archaeologist, was as abhorrent to us both as we knew it would be. Moreover, an accident happened which did not favour stumbling about incomprehensible ruins on a coldish day; for though it was fine, a rather unpleasant wind had now sprung up.

My throat being still much inflamed, I was travelling with a bottle of gargle in the pocket of my covert coat, and while the little Ford was flinging itself about on the usual sort of Greek road, out came the cork. It was just as we reached our bourne that I suddenly became conscious of a cold trickle, and leaping up, found a large puddle on the seat. Bottle and cork were waved in the chauffeur's face to explain the incident, and we hurriedly scaled the mound, to be confronted with the worst type of curator, one of those who are by way of speaking French (or English). This dreadful old idiot, who possibly understood his own explanations, dragged us pitilessly from pillar to post; and I remember one moment of culminating fury when, with hands in pockets, holding my wet garments as far away as possible from my person, I learned that a particularly chaotic heap of huge stones was "the ladies' drawing-room", the curator imparting this interesting piece of information with a fatuous smile, and

nodding at us, as who should say: "Yes! you can take my word for it!"

There was, however, one celebrated subterranean passage the constructive skill and beauty of which appealed even to ignorance and distaste such as ours; and that is about all we got out of Tiryns, except that here a suspicion long incubating in my inner mind leapt forth, Minerva-like, into the ranks of settled convictions. Staring at this unsightly mound, it occurred to me that the reserved, not to say forbidding manners —allied frequently to a corpse-like appearance—that characterise so many archaeologists, is probably an inevitable result of making such places their spiritual home. I have observed that the few cheerful, friendly, entirely human excavators I have met (though I believe Signor Boni was allowed to be a great man in spite of his personal charm) are evidently despised by the others, the implication being that these are mere triflers. It was amusing the other day in Paris to meet two frigid and lordly ones of the orthodox type each of whom looks down his nose, so I am told, when the other is mentioned behind his back, but who ran together like twin dew-drops in implied disdain of a third whom I know well, and whose buoyancy of spirit must be greatly against him. Most workers, perhaps most humans, are prone to secret jealousy, but for undisguised scorn of all other workers in his own line of business, commend me to the archaeologist!

To go back to ourselves. Argos would have been a disappointment if we had not been told on authority we had come to trust, that is, by a person whose predilections coincided with our own, to expect nothing beyond the thrill of a name. But when we arrived at Nauplia it was a case of love at first sight. This, I think, is one of the few places in Greece where one could really settle down, provided a warm room can be secured there in the winter, and I cannot understand why its charms are not bruited abroad.[1] A castle-crowned Acropolis towering over the Argolic gulf; on either side, and opposite you, a coast-line such as only Greece can show; a good hotel, and possibilities of getting away, if you wish to, by both land and sea . . . what more do people want? Here too is a port free from quay-side blackguardism, the dread of which made Plato put his ideal city well inland. "The sea", he says, according to Dean Inge, "is pleasant enough as a daily companion, but it has also a bitter and brackish quality, filling the streets with merchants and shopkeepers, and begetting in the souls of men uncertain and dishonest ways"—a passage that makes one think of places like Glasgow and Naples. It is as creditable to a port to be clean, quiet, and friendly, as for an inordinately rich person to remain human. Here for once we got our two single rooms without a fight; the cooking was excellent, and

[1] I see that Anthony Dell, author of *Isles of Greece* (1926), shares our feelings about Nauplia.

in front of the hotel lagered a particularly attractive collection of bootblacks—more, we thought, than could possibly find work in a town of that size. I have not yet spoken of this product of Greece. Not even in Athens are boots and shoes polished in your hotel, the whole industry being in the hands of this race of capable little boys, whose collection of bottles and brushes is always the same, but whose various ways of conveying, with an impatient tap, the words, " Next foot, stupid ", it is good fun to watch.

The expedition to Epidaurus next day was a failure because of the weather. The theatre is evidently magnificent and in a wonderful state of preservation, but the zeal of very few tourists would be equal to testing its far-famed acoustic properties in pouring rain. No beckonings of the curator, no urgings of the chauffeur, could make us either enter the Museum-shed, or take the faintest interest in the disgusting tame rabbits that flopped about in all directions, and were evidently considered a " feature ". But as by the time we got home the weather had cleared, we made up for a disappointing day by a walk round the Acropolis rock, and heavens ! what colours that sea took !

Next day, flatly disobeying our orders, which were to visit the Museum, we went for another divine walk, and caught the 11.35 A.M. train for Tripolitza, eating our " luncheons " on the way. Ghiolman's instruc-

tions for the rest of the day ran thus : " Leave the train at Tripolitza at 4.15 P.M., and walk outside the station to take the postal automobile for Sparta (three hours). At Sparta Hôtel Panhellinion for the night. Dinner will be served at the restaurant *bellow* this hotel."

That train was, and we were told always is, absolutely crammed ; there were people perched on the roof, people crouching on the steps, people climbing up and down and shuffling along the footboard all the way. In our carriage were a good-natured Dutchman and his wife bound for Kalamata, which they cannot have reached, given our progress, before midnight. And since it behoves a faithful chronicler, as I said before, to grasp the nettle of this subject firmly, it must be mentioned that these trains nominally stop nowhere for more than three minutes (it will probably be more like ten, but you can't take it for granted) and that neither on them, nor on four out of five platforms, is there any sort of convenience. Learning this appalling fact, the poor Dutchman said to the conductor : " But look here, *we* have not got Greek digestions ; what on earth are we to do ? " . . . At which point the train reached Tripolitza, and E. and I got out.

The station yard was Pandemonium, crammed with aged taxis and charabancs, on one of which, that may have been " the postal automobile ", though it in no way differed from its lovely companions,

places had been reserved for us, mine being the seat of greatest comfort next the chauffeur. This car was by way of holding seven persons and had to convey not only more than that number of travellers, but also their voluminous luggage, including crates of live-stock and sacks of vegetables, tied and slung on anyhow. A brave attempt was made to poke in one more—"un tout petit", as some one explained soothingly—between me and the chauffeur, but I firmly quenched it, for my arm was already touching the wheel, and E., who knows about cars and their loading, had privately remarked that if the road at all resembled the roads we had previously travelled, an accident must surely occur sooner or later. The whole fleet of vehicles was under the command of a tall, good-looking young man, who, as postal Jehu, had to see them all off before starting with our car, which now looked like a repulsive Christmas tree. While we waited, the village idiot, an epileptic, who was evidently a popular pet, was suddenly seized by a group of men and hoisted on to the box seat of an ancient four-wheeler that might have been his grandfather, so ramshackle and all-over-the-place was its anatomy; and as he sat there gibbering some one lit a piece of newspaper and singed his bare toes, his shrieks eliciting roars of laughter. Let none be horrified! This was a joke, conceived in a spirit of affection, and the idiot, who evidently understood, was merely playing up to the best of his ability.

At long last, wriggling his way through various impedimenta, the boss clambered up into the driver's seat; then bethought him otherwise and got down, his place being taken after another long interval by a rather sulky-looking chauffeur. And now a female voice was heard from the back of the car, and a Greek lady, half rising in her seat, made what was evidently a determined protest, whereupon the sulky man, looking blacker than thunder, clambered down again; and after yet another long interval the boss reappeared, took the wheel, and off we went. We subsequently learned from the lady, who hailed from Sparta and spoke French, that the sulky man was a very poor driver with a long list of accidents against him, and that she had threatened to get out and lodge a complaint rather than be driven by him!

When we came to see what that road was like, especially in view of the rapidly oncoming darkness, it seemed incredible that a van-load of natives should have been willing to put up with an unskilled pilot. The metalling of this one connecting link between Menelaus's kingdom and the rest of the world—for the road leads straight to Sparta and nowhere else—is not so bad; but the pitch of it, the narrowness of it, as it crosses one mountain range after another, with precipices, precipices all the way, can be very alarming under circumstances such as ours.

It was now becoming very cold, especially for people seated on the draughty cross-bench, among

whom were E. and our benefactor's maid. E. had offered her rug to this thin, lightly-clad, piteously shivering individual, but the mistress, who was tucked away snugly in the back of the car, had snatched it from her, merely remarking to E. : " Oh, if you don't want it I'll be glad of it myself ! " At every group of houses we stopped to collect, or deliver, letters, and as each halt lasted at least ten minutes, it became obvious that we were doomed to pass in darkness through some of the finest and fiercest scenery in Greece. Our headlights now came into requisition, and consisted of a single rickety acetylene lamp tied on with string ; one of the kind that, by way of a joke, almost goes out whenever you slow down at a dangerous spot. But fainting or flaring, it never ceased to emit fumes that almost caused E., who sat just behind it, to swoon. This is no figure of speech ; some people are thus affected by that particular kind of non-laughing gas, and if she didn't succumb on this particular occasion it was probably owing to the combination of cold and agitation. Now and then, as we rounded a spur, a light would manifest itself far away, above or below us, belonging to some vehicle advancing in our direction. At such moments we pulled up, and a man who had been standing on the step all the way would then unhitch the lamp, and walk to meet the envoy of the other driver ; whereupon the two held a conclave as to where it would be safest to pass each other. The rule of the

road mercifully decreed that on all these occasions, three in number, I think, we had the inside. But this I know ; at the faintest indication of backing I should have got out at any risk.

By now the moon was struggling in a tangle of stormy clouds, and at one moment three jibbing horses, attached to a sort of phantom diligence, were urged past us on the very edge of the precipice, their tossing heads outlined against the sky. Evidently they were unaccustomed to motor engines, but this was not the ideal place and hour for enlarging their minds. Presently the moon set, at least I think it must have ; anyhow it was pitch dark when we got to Sparta.

Now what I would like to know is this. Throughout that drive, if comments were made we of course could not understand them, nor can countenances be studied in the dark ; but if the Greeks look upon such an experience as nothing out of the way, they must either be the bravest or the most happy-go-lucky race in the world. Which is it ? When I think of the chauffeur to whose incompetence these local people were quite ready to confide themselves—all at least except the protesting lady, who was evidently a person of some importance—it looks as if the latter must be the correct hypothesis. But we shall never know for certain.

E. Wasmuth, Berlin.

SPARTA, SHOWING THE TAYGETOS MOUNTAINS.

FROM SPARTA, *VIA* MISTRA *AND* TRIPI, *TO* KALAMATA

AT THE DOOR of the Panhellinion Hotel a fresh proof of Ghiolman's omnipotence awaited us. It may be remembered that the programme for this day concluded with the words, "bellow the hotel". Well, in obedience to this order, the hotel literally *was* bellowing, inasmuch as the Athletic Union of Sparta was entertaining members of the German Turn-Verein in the restaurant, each group alternately giving specimens of their national music followed by applause and toasts. The Greek contribution was, alas, of the feeblest international music-hall type; foolish *unisono* caterwaulings, accompanied by a guitarist, master of two injudiciously applied chords, and a violinist who had not succeeded in learning any one of the melodies he was by way of supporting.

Then came the turn of the Germans: nice, clean-looking boys with yellow hair and wide-open collars. They began by singing beautiful Volkslieder, in four parts, of course, while one of them seized his Greek comrade's violin and improvised delicious musicianly *obligati* round about the voices. It was another world. For my part I was back in the beloved Germany of my youth, walking with three singers, one of whom

was my dear old friend George Henschel, through the pine woods of Thuringia, making exactly the sort of music these boys were making now. Suddenly they struck up a very different strain, something with a startlingly vigorous rhythm, rapped out, as it were, by musical sledge-hammers. I would have given anything to ask what it was, but a probably morbid sense of delicacy held me back, for it was so evidently a song of the German *Risorgimento*. Fiery, irresistible as youth, yet in iron bands, one felt that a nation which after defeat can forge and drive home music like that has a future before it far greater than its past.

Having been told in Athens to prepare for the worst at Sparta, the Panhellinion Hotel was a pleasant surprise. True, some of the doors had no fastening, and in others the frosted-glass upper half occasionally lacked a pane, but we preferred that sort of thing to the plush-and-stucco fraudulencies of Karditza, especially as the landlord was friendly and competent, the food and wine first-rate, and the restaurant a homely place in which, as I think happens in most of these small Greek towns, the residents habitually feed rather than at home.

Next morning, following Ghiolman's instructions this time, we visited the museum, which was wholly disappointing. If our visit to Sparta had fallen a few days later, when the Leonidas[1] statue was unearthed, we should probably have been moving heaven and

[1] Leonidas is the nickname of the "Spartan warrior" facing p. 70.

Marble Statue of a Warrior excavated at Sparta in May 1925 by the British School of Archæology at Athens.

(Reproduced by kind permission of the British School.)

earth to get a sight of him instead of sitting basking beside the Eurotas, or rather in the middle of it, for just now that river was a mere trickle of silver flowing round islands of shingle. The word Eurotas had always evoked inexpressible emotions in me since I read a certain wild chorus, I think in the *Hippolytus*; something about a garden and one of Hercules' love affairs. I was vague about it on the spot and have not looked it up since, but the spell of a word is potent though memory and Lemprière may fail you. Yet even if this country had not been Helen's home, I think E. and I would have been just as overwhelmed by the beauty confronting us—the brilliant green and silver foreground, the snow-covered mountains east and west, and that particular witchery of light that Nature seems able to achieve in Greece only (all travellers are agreed on this point), and which on that lovely morning literally made you catch your breath.

The rest of our programme for this, our fourth day, Thursday, April 16, ran: "*After early lunch start immediately on mulesback for Mistra* (1 *hour*), *visiting there the Byzantine churches with their* wounderful *mosaics. Ride thence to the small village Tripi for the night. Dinner will be served in the private house of Mr. Demetrius Aspiotis; also sleep in the same house.*" We had been wondering what sort of person Mr. Aspiotis might be when, just before lunch, a tall, magnificent peasant in white jacket and leggings with fustanella and rosetted shoes was introduced to us by the landlord as our next host. We

were further informed that he was preceding us with our luggage to Tripi, and that his cousin, who could speak English, and another muleteer would call for us at the Panhellinion not later than 1.45—which turned out to mean 2.30. I rather fear Mr. Aspiotis's get-up is insisted on by Ghiolman as a " feature ", for in all South Greece I don't think we saw more than a dozen peasants in national dress, and in every case both the garments and their wearers were old and worn, whereas Aspiotis was almost eligible for a fancy-dress ball.

Muleteers supposed to speak English are an irritating breed that should be specially avoided by the traveller. A word or two of parrot-learned Greek helped out by gesture is quite enough to convey : " Is the road a bad one ? . . . I want to mount (or dismount). . . . We will lunch *here* ", and other simple propositions they are quite accustomed to tackle. But the linguist-muleteer, having a reputation to keep up, is so busy talking English and pretending to understand it, that such natural intelligence as he may possess forsakes him. Unfortunately this particular couple of muleteers were chartered to take us all the way to Kalamata, so we had to put up with Mr. Aspiotis's cousin for two whole days. He was particularly irritating at Mistra, the famous deserted city of the Middle Ages, where he would insist on explaining to us in his awful jargon matters we had already learned from our guide-books.

E. was rather thrilled by Mistra ; I, who consider Pompeii the only ruined seat of a past civilisation with enough beauty and interest to compensate for its deadness, hated this Byzantine shell, which affected me as might a town built of skulls and thigh-bones. One had seen too much of that sort of desolation on the Italian front during the war, and in France after it. As for the churches with their "*wounderful* mosaics", the church at Daphne was just as interesting and less dilapidated. Unfortunately Mistra is not wholly deserted, and we were at once led by Cousin Aspiotis to a convent inhabited by such a terrible collection of nuns, that E., who is interested in matters ecclesiastical, said she must think about heading a mission to the Eastern Church in Greece. The yard round which the convent buildings grouped was simply a chicken-run, and the ladies, who seemed to be, and perhaps were, half-wits, were dressed in a sort of caricature of a nun's habit, consisting of black head-dresses, mannish-looking black overcoats held together and feminised with white safety-pins, and voluminous grey skirts which trailed voluptuously in the nameless filth peculiar to chicken-runs.

One good result of the Turkish occupation is that everywhere in Greece, even in the veriest hovels, you can get a good cup of coffee ; and in this dreadful convent that was our only good moment, tempered though it was with the usual sweet liqueur and jam. The Reverend Mother, who evidently did not put

cleanliness next to godliness, then proceeded to show us round their church, and explained the panels in a famous miracle-working picture. Having been told at least half a dozen times that we had no Greek, she nevertheless not only talked it ceaselessly, as did the whole band, but kept on bombarding us with questions, and giving way to very unsaintly displays of surprise and irritation at our inability to respond. She and Cousin Aspiotis were among the very, very few unpleasant people we met in Greece.

As bearing on this, our one and only impression of a Greek nunnery, I have lately been reading Mr. G. Coulton's *Mediaeval Studies*—an examination into the then condition of religious houses in Western Europe which bases, not on the latter-day imaginings of sentimentality or bias, but on certain grimly eloquent contemporary records now slumbering in the British Museum. Unfortunately these are in Latin, which renders them unavailable for the general public and liable to very special " editing ". But it is safe to say that the state of slackness and corruption laid bare by these " Visitations " (which date from long, long before the Reformation) is barely thinkable in our days of publicity. Even if the Mistra nunnery be typical, and matched by many a monastery in the East (which may not be the case), when the time comes, opinion from without or a new spirit from within will bring about a better state of things.

E. Wasmuth, Berlin.

Byzantine Church at Mistra.

Meanwhile we need not be too fussed as regards this mote in our Grecian brother's eye.

The walk up to Tripi, fraught with backward glances over the plain of Sparta and Eurotas, was divine, for in the afternoon and evening the light had the same magic quality it had in the morning,—a quality which foreboded, though we knew it not, a change in the weather. The road was of a nature here and there to confirm a faith in mules conceived on the slopes of Parnassus, and which was to be put to severe test and clung to convulsively next day. Among other things we learned that if these animals, for once walking on the safe side of the path, suddenly make a determined rush for the precipice and snatch at a piece of overhanging vegetation, this is an ingrained habit which it is both futile and unnecessary to try and correct, inasmuch as mules have no mouths but plenty of brains and know to an eighth of an inch how far they may go.

The " private house " of Mr. Aspiotis turned out to be an ideal peasant residence situated in a garden at the far end of the village, and the room we were to sleep in (for one felt it would be unfair to clamour for separate rooms here) was lovely to look at. Huge, almost square, panelled, and spotlessly clean, it reminded one of Saint Ursula's bedroom in the Carpaccio picture at Venice. In opposite corners were two little beds, which turned out to be nothing but

wooden chests covered with something too thin to be called mattresses, yet thick enough to have lumps in them. No tables, no washing apparatus, though a towel hanging on a nail near the door inspired a flicker of hope, and the bedroom crockery was impersonated by old petrol tins. In fact, no furniture at all except the beds. Mrs. Aspiotis was a fine-looking woman, but if the master of the house had not introduced her, with a smack on the back, as " my wife ", one would have taken her for his mother. Here, as everywhere, peasant women age more quickly than the men, and no wonder. The washing apparatus turned out to be on a balcony, commanded by a similar balcony at right angles to it which belonged to our host's part of the house. It consisted of a tiny tin cylinder fastened by a hook to a post, and emitted through its tap an unwilling trickle of water into a basin which, when we attempted to wash our hands, was found to contain cabbage stalks.

Concerning the food you get in these " private houses " I afterwards spoke my mind to Ghiolman, and he quite agreed that this question, and that of beds, required looking into. The soup, chicken soup with rice in it, was always excellent, but the " joint ", whether yet another chicken or the inevitable hunk of lamb, was absolutely uneatable, because the Greek peasant has no notion of cooking. Also they sometimes, I think, kept back the second chicken bargained for by Ghiolman, and fobbed off the juiceless carcase

of the first as a new, rather over-stewed bird. Anyhow this was all you got except dry bread (nearly always excellent) and coffee ; never vegetables, rice, or macaroni. Before we went to bed E. had occasion to make some demand of the family who had already retired, and came back with a tale of mysterious congeries of human forms stowed away under the sloping roof, as revealed by the fitful gleam of a dying wood fire. I think that vision was partly responsible for the bad hours that followed.

The night was terrible. For my part I was over-tired, and my legs and back had not yet recovered from an accident on the breakwater at Nauplia. Alas ! as the *Punch* grandmamma would have put it, forty years make a difference in the elasticity of a girl's muscles, and I had simply toppled over backwards on to rocks some three or four feet below me, and was still, and for many days to come, blue and yellow all over. Moreover, the meal above described was not ideal fare for the over-tired, and E.'s feet were sticking out eighteen inches beyond her couch. She is even worse than I am at wooing sleep in impossible beds, and long after I had dropped off for the time being, the din of the nightingales kept her awake—so she complained afterwards.

And there were worse trials than that. When we arrived I was too hungry and exhausted to explore the precincts, as is my wont in a strange place. Sallying forth, after darkness had fallen, to do so, grunts and

snufflings warned you that the garden was also the farmyard. And when, as immediately happened, the roused master of the house stepped out on to his balcony with an electric torch, the grunts and snufflings fitted themselves with green, yellow, and red glass eyes. Throughout the night one or other of the menagerie would become vocal, to be reinforced presently with other soloists, followed by a choral burst; in fact, the usual Three Choirs Festival routine. And there were dogs that punctuated the lively conversation of passers-by; in fact, it was after as wretched a night as I remember that we quitted Tripi next morning at 8.30, with a heavy day before us.

We were timed on the programme to reach our objective, Kalamata, the chief port of South Greece, " on or about 6 P.M.", but it soon became manifest that bad weather was ahead of us—a sad thought, for the famous Langada Gorge that leads across the Taygetos range into the ancient kingdom of Messene is one of the wildest and most beautiful passes in Greece. Long before we reached what we took to be the summit—but unfortunately there are three passes to be crossed on this trip—the cold rain that had begun to fall turned into snow and hail, which, as we got into high altitudes, was driven horizontally at us by a furious wind and found its way through crevices in our apparel, swathed in mackintosh though we were like mounted mummies. I forgot to say that Greek

saddles are rounded wooden frames, thickly covered with rugs (and spare coats) and furnished with high pommels fore and aft. We wore breeches and rode astride, but occasionally sat sideways like the peasants —a welcome change of position to the stiff and aged, and even to the young and supple if, like E., they possess limbs too long to stow away comfortably on those strange contrivances. Of course, too, we walked a good deal, but being anxious to husband my strength I rode as much as possible in spite of the vileness of the path, our progress along which resembled an uphill obstacle race—the obstacles being rocks, roots, and buttered slides. It seemed impossible that these long slabs of smooth rock set at any angle you please and greasy with snow and mud, could afford a foothold, but our amazing animals made nothing of them. Occasionally the track disappeared altogether, swept away for hundreds of yards by the torrent below. At length, after countless droppings down into and uprisings out of the flood, the pretence that there was any path at all was abandoned, and we struggled up the bed of the torrent on foot; our mules picking their way through fallen trees, uprooted shrubs, overhanging boughs, and round, over, or under rocks, with a blend of courage, resource, and prudence that, as I said before, revolutionised our ideas as to the powers of four-footed hooved animals.

I think we are all hypnotised by recollections of the extraordinary stupidity horses display in tight

places, and forget that cows, chased out of gardens and wheatfields, tackle banks and hedges with an agility that relegates the legend of the cow that jumped over the moon to the realm of sober history. In fact, animals have a good deal up their sleeve. All the same I am glad it was not till our touring was over that, in response to a remark of mine that mules seem incapable of making a false step, a Greek acquaintance replied with a laugh: "Not at all; they frequently fall down flat". But I am certain this is an exaggeration. Again and again when we chose to walk our men would ride the mules down places it was hard enough to negotiate on two legs—a proof surely of unlimited confidence based on experience.

To come back to our difficult ascent, not even a herdsman's hut broke its loneliness, though occasionally one caught sight of a small child minding goats. By the time we were in the region of the three passes the hail and snow became further complicated by a mist so thick that nothing was visible except a few yards of rock wall on the safe side of the path; but little rushes executed now and again by the mules towards the other side, and the odd way the mist came boiling up there in a straight line, confirmed the dread surmise that here were precipices. Our toes and fingers lost all feeling, and time was not. . . .

Just as we had got over a third pass, and were remarking to each other that this must surely be the authentic descent at last, an advancing cavalcade

materialised in the mist, headed by two ladies "on mules-back" admirably got up for the weather. Now at Athens I had come across an American suffragette who had been with me in Holloway, and thinking the younger of the two ladies was she, I hailed her by name. In reply a very fine "denture" was flashed at me, and I saw that though indubitably an American, this was not my fellow-prisoner. I apologised, asked if they were going to Tripi (a foolish question, for where else could they be going?), and wished them joy of the awful ride before them. After which the fog swallowed them up.

And now, as so often happens in places like the top of the Langada Pass, the mist and rain would occasionally yield for a moment, and we had sudden, ineffable, Moses-like visions of a green-and-gold country below us bathed in sunshine, and beyond it blue sea. A little farther down we stopped in a hovel to eat the disgusting lunch provided by Mr. Aspiotis —hard-boiled eggs that ran up your arm when you cracked them (it is odd, but true, that the Greeks are not able to boil an egg hard), and spillikens of old, old chicken too tough even to chew, washed down with our own excellent wine from Sparta. The muleteers seemed quite content with leeks, crusts, and their usual drink—a little turpentine (otherwise country wine) mixed with water. Our fingers were still lifeless, and we asked, though quite without hope, if there was any brandy on the premises? Whereupon some

excellent native cognac was produced in a manner so surreptitious that we came to the conclusion it had not paid duty. Of course we treated our men, and in spite of their amazing sobriety—or perhaps for that reason—it had the greatest success. Well for us that we happened on that secret still, if secret it was, for from this point onwards the rain fell ceaselessly and the fog thickened every moment.

But now our pilgrim's progress became enlivened with a series of unforeseen incidents that will always inspire us afresh with amazement and admiration whenever we think of that expedition. It must be remembered that this was Good Friday according to the Greek calendar; that Easter is the supreme Festival of the Eastern Church, and that the Saturday is sacred to preparations for the feast. I do not know what the population of that side of the Taygetos range may be, but every adult had evidently gone down early that morning to Kalamata to buy provisions and sell selected specimens of live-stock, and they were now streaming home again in endless procession, driving sheep, goats, bullocks, and mules before them. The path became a mere trampled ribbon of black grease stuck with submerged jags of rock down which we plunged and slithered gingerly, dreading a sprained ankle;—terrible enough going even in this white, woolly dusk, but long before the procession would reach home, night (and what a night) would have

fallen! Nearly everybody carried a lantern with a candle-end stuck in it, though of what earthly use such an illumination could be we failed to understand. Some were walking, some riding mules, and all these beasts of burden, human or otherwise, were laden past the limits of the conceivable. One female pedestrian was carrying a huge live lamb; her mounted sisters were half smothered in babies and parcels, and all the time goats, followed by shrieking little boys, were swarming about the mountain-side at full gallop and suddenly plumping down on the path under your nose, raising a geyser of mud. Every one seemed perfectly happy, and though the occasion was not quite an ordinary one, for even in this Church of innumerable saints and holy days Easter comes but once a year, that scene proved what can be done, cheerfully and as a matter of course, by sober, hard-working peasants such as these beloved Greeks.

At last the plain was reached and we soon struck a fine road, or rather a section of one that had quietly come to an end a few miles outside Kalamata, perhaps because, like the stucco monstrosity of an hotel at Karditza, it had been projected on a scale too magnificent to live up to. These roads, starting in high spirits but giving up after a few miles, are a puzzling problem you often come across in Greece; modern mysteries, not of religious but of municipal origin, run not by Orphic priests but by County Councillors with an eye to some political main chance or other. So at

least I suppose. Anyhow it was wonderful to be on a real road again, and when we reached Kalamata at 7 P.M. I, for one, was very glad. In all an eleven hours' journey, on which E. rode perhaps during two and I during four hours, and which, thanks to the weather, had been a severe test of endurance. Taygetos (together with Erymanthos, which would swim into our ken later on) is mentioned in the Odyssey as a favourite hunting-ground of Artemis, but I doubt if even she would have taken out her pack on such a day. Warmly welcomed at the Hôtel Royal (in Greek it sounds much more like itself, Xenodocheion Vassiliken) and settled down to a first-rate meal, I congratulated myself on having knocked out Messene and Mount Ithome—originally the next items on our programme—in favour of twenty-four hours of absolute repose in Kalamata.

Footnote.—To save readers unnecessary text-searchings, let me here confess that my recollection (see p. 71) of the Eurotas being mentioned in the *Hippolytus* bases on a wild inaccuracy. The love affair referred to occurs in the great chorus "Eros! Eros"; thus far memory did not play me false; but turning from Professor Gilbert Murray's translation, where there is nothing about the Eurotas, to the German of Wilamonitz, I find that the word is not *Eurotas* at all, but *Eurytos*, who was King of Oechalia, a Lacedemonian district, and father of Hercules' victim, "The Bride of Disaster"! This shows how little accuracy has to do with a thrill!

KALAMATA, ANDRITSAENA, *AND* BASSAE

THE HOTEL was spotlessly clean, and the landlord, a stoutish, solemn but most capable and attentive gentleman in a frock coat, began by begging us, as soon as we should have rested and fed, to inspect the establishment. His manner was still more grave—it was even portentous—when, an hour later, he entered our rooms, and carefully shutting the door, said : " Mesdames, did you meet on the way two compatriots of yours proceeding to Tripi ? " We replied that we had met two ladies, but that they were Americans, not English. " And now," said he, leading his mystified guests into the passage with a deep bow, " will you do me the favour to inspect my house ? "

It was evident that the whole place had recently been done up, including the floors, which were painted (he had begun by putting my Gladstone bag on a chair, but I objected that this plan made unpacking too difficult). Above all it was obvious that he knew, and had concentrated upon, the weak point in Greek hotels, and I must say that every mortal thing possible in a country without organised water-supply had been done by this excellent man for the

convenience of his guests. After listening with a certain gratification, yet as one who knows that nothing less meets the case, to our cries of wonder and delight, he conducted us back in dead silence to our rooms, and forthwith launched into a lurid description of the behaviour of our predecessors, the two Americans, beginning with their having spent a whole day washing their linen in an indiarubber bath, thereby splashing and staining his immaculate boards. And from this, and other minor offences, he gradually worked up to the supreme crime of all, relating almost with tears in his eyes how these ladies had not only brushed aside with contempt the sanitary arrangements on which so much thought and pains had been expended, but peremptorily insisted on a traveller's right to . . . well, to put her own private room to any and every use!

The solemn face of the landlord as he retailed these tragedies, his stately demeanour, his frock coat, and above all his slow but highly descriptive gestures, combined with the nature of his tale to produce such an effect on E. that she collapsed on the sofa in a helpless agony of laughter, which she afterwards declared was rendered uncontrollable by occasional glimpses of my sympathy-convulsed countenance. It was evident that the pride of our host had been wounded in its most sensitive spot, and I do not wonder at his indignation.

All countries produce detestable and ill-bred per-

sonalities, but conduct such as that described above is only met with in people beneath whose polish there is no subsoil of tradition ; who pique themselves on exterior habits of refinement and fastidiousness, but have omitted to cultivate the corresponding quality within. Owing to the origins of their civilisation, this type is more frequently met with in the inhabitants of the United States than in those of older countries ; and though I am certain that decent Americans would be as horrified as we were at the conduct of the Z.'s, on the other hand I don't think women of any other civilised community would be capable of it. We were thankful that we had begun by saying they were not English, and whenever an opportunity occurred, which was the case more than once later on, we rubbed the fact in well.

Next morning while we were breakfasting the landlord burst in, almost excitedly for him, to tell us that a boy, late of the Z. cavalcade, had come back reporting that Mrs. Z. had beaten a muleteer ; that the muleteer's uncle had sworn to have the law of her, and that he, the landlord, should certainly back him up (though it seemed to us that for the sort of insult put upon our host it would be difficult to claim damages in a law court). He had previously told us that on the top of all the rest these ladies were intolerably rude and haughty, but if Mrs. Z. really did beat the muleteer I should say she must have been off her head. No one in their senses would care to make

an enemy in a lonely, breakneck place like the Langada Gorge.

That day of repose was mainly dedicated to correspondence interspersed with occasional repinings, for the weather had now taken the right turn, and Taygetos, dazzling in new white garments, was free of clouds. Yet even then our lamentations were half-hearted. Of course from a certain point of view that expedition had been a failure; the shape of the map just there, the mist-framed glimpses vouchsafed to us on the pass, little as they revealed compared to what might have been visible (including the promontory whereon lies "sandy Pylos"), made us realise that we had been cheated by a blizzard of what would probably have been the supreme moment of our tour. Yet that failure has left a wild exhilaration in our memories for which we cannot quite account. I have a friend much younger than myself who, though a very inexperienced climber, once attempted Monte Rosa in the company of her father and me. About half a mile from the hut we had slept at, which is 10,000 feet up, after being whirled round and round, and cast violently down two or three times by the winds that rage in these altitudes, she announced with tears that to go on was impossible, and had to be taken back to the hut by one of the guides. Yet she still speaks of that expedition as one of the supreme experiences of a lifetime! I suppose it is the same sort of thing with E. and me about Taygetos.

One useful result of the fine weather was that we were able to dry our sodden garments in peace, the assortment of boots, hats, and stockings suspended from our first-floor windows blending sympathetically with other Easter Saturday decorations in the street below. From morn till night processions were perambulating the town, the processioners oblivious, as they always are, to the non-decorative effect of candlelight out of doors, and also to the swealing of hot grease over their hands. And all day long, fearing to be taken for heathen, we never ceased explaining that our Easter had fallen a week ago. In the afternoon we walked some way round the bay, and came upon a big refugee settlement that rather reminded me of the Aldershot of my youth—symmetrical lines of huts, only built of concrete instead of wood. Evidently the training of seafaring men was the object of this camp, for complicated manoeuvres with ropes and boats were going on, accompanied by more than the usual amount of yelling. It was a piping day, and we laid us down on the beach and half buried ourselves in hot sand, gradually melting the last splinters of Taygetos ice out of our blood.

Lying there, gazing westwards across the bay, we pondered the problem of Telemachus's most fascinating adventure, his visit to Nestor at Pylos, and the expedition undertaken at Nestor's advice to Sparta in order to glean possible news of his father at the court of Menelaus and Helen. Nestor's son drove him

thither in a chariot, and we are told that they were two days and a night on the way. As the Langada and other gorges that lead straight across the mountains to Sparta were out of the question, we concluded the young men must have travelled round the north end of the range as the railway does to-day, turning off south somewhere near Diavolitsi, where we were to quit the train on the morrow to head northwards for Andritsaena. Yet even so, how, we asked ourselves, could a chariot travel " full speed " through a mountainous region devoid of roads, traversed only by embryonic mule-tracks ?

A week or two later the problem was solved for us by one who, speaking with authority, informed us that the foundations of a magnificent Minoan road leading from Messene round the mountains had recently been laid bare ; that it is of the same period as the road that cuts Crete in half and had quite certainly fallen out of use long before the classic period, by which time that whole civilisation had faded into the realm of legend. Information such as this would not leave one cold even if gathered at Clapham Junction ; imparted on the spot it becomes almost too thrilling to be borne.[1]

[1] Two days after writing the above paragraph I was privileged to meet two British archaeologists whose reputations are beyond question very high. Neither of them had heard anything about this Minoan road and were evidently more than sceptical. One of them told me, moreover, that there is another

On Easter Sunday we embarked on the section of the programme which was to yield the two most beautiful walks of our whole tour, namely, the three days' journey to Olympia ; and as we were about to spend a couple of nights in yet another "private house"—that of one Mr. Ambriotis—we thought well to lay in a few stores. Our hours were getting more and more fantastic, as will be allowed when I say we left Kalamata by train at 6.15 A.M. and that our real day's work began at 9 A.M., when we were met at Diavolitsi by a particularly nice set of muleteers (mine being a very handsome, well-made young fellow with a dazzling smile), and mutually congratulated each other on being quit for good of the intolerable linguist. A sumpter mule is provided for a three days' trip, and ours was in charge of a limping old man who looked seventy but may well have been eighty, and who made nothing of walking thirty-five or forty miles a day on an onion and a crust.

Easter was with us all the way ; at every wayside shrine our men did obeisance, throwing coins on to the open shelf below the ikon. Any passer-by could steal these offerings if so disposed, but we were told it never happens, and my own impression is that the

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and equally sandy Pylos not far from Olympia which may well have been the domain of Nestor, in which case there is no difficulty in accounting for the excellent going made by the young men. This information is so depressing that one prefers to give it in a footnote.

reverence of these men was deeply felt, and that if the Larissa inspector had been able to grasp what one meant by the question " Are the Greeks religious ? " he might possibly have replied with truth, " Intensely so ". The villages, if one can call them such, through which we passed were beflagged, and in one the mayor was on the look-out for us and asked us to drink with him. We did so, and E. delivered herself of the correct reply to the Easter greeting, " Christ is risen ", as if modern Greek were her usual medium, while I mumbled inarticulate sounds of similar sonority.

Our muleteers were, as I said, delightful and their manners perfection. But when the road was taken again, stimulated, no doubt, as we ourselves were, by refreshment partaken of, a loud excitable conversation began between my man who was leading and E.'s who was in the rear of the procession. After a while E. caught the words " punishment ", " the lady ", " assizes ", reiterated again and again. Evidently fresh news of the crimes of the Z.'s, who it must be remembered had travelled our route in the inverse sense, had been gleaned in the village, and this frantic duet was the result. The old man took no part in it, treating this and all other matters with the philosophy of the aged. As they had no English and their intelligence was therefore intact, it was easy to convey to the other two that the noise must cease ; which it at once did.

On this ten hours' walk and ride from Diavolitsi to Andritsaena we realised how impossible it is to bring home to any one who has not visited the country what wild flowers can be. For a mile or two the dominating fact in the carpet would be scarlet and pink anemones ; then suddenly a hillside of blue or yellow flowers we did not know the names of, neither of us, alas, being botanists ; then a divine whiff, stronger and sweeter than any scent known in our northern climes, and presently our mules would be trampling on and snatching mouthfuls of huge violets. The mountain paths are dotted with little cisterns at which the mules made mechanical rushes ; the water of these fountains is not always fit for human drinking, but they are invariably the centre of a mad growth of flowers. We stopped for lunch that day at a cottage, in front of which were tables and benches—sign that passers-by could here wash down their bread and leeks with the resin and water they love. The desire for privacy and silence is a thing Greeks cannot understand, and when to the astonishment of our men we bade them carry our provisions across a field hard by to a big isolated tree, we were followed by all the inmates of the house, including half a dozen children, who began handling our drinking cups and otherwise giving way to blameless but exasperating curiosity. At last, hateful as it was to do it, we had to signify in drastic dumb show that we desired to be left in solitude. On this point there is a

real and probably unbridgeable gulf between their race and ours, for in every other respect the Greek peasant, whether muleteer or agricultural labourer, is a very great gentleman, possessing in the midst of almost barbaric conditions an innate culture that certain younger and very "civilised" northern nations one could name may possibly not attain to, if ever, for another thousand years.

Before descending into the valley that lay north of us and proceeding to tackle the next rise, we said good-bye to Taygetos—not without anger and expostulation, for again to-day the summit was cloudless—and reached Andritsaena about 7 P.M. It is a curious, red-roofed place that, but for the absence of smoke, has a fantastic kinship with Durham as seen from the railway. We had been advised that our host, Mr. Ambriotis, did not know English, but that his brother-in-law, Socrates, spoke it fluently, and had been ordered to be on the look-out for us. Given Greek ideas of time, needless to say this plan miscarried; the house of Mr. Ambriotis appeared to be empty, and our men went off to a certain café to seek for Socrates. Presently a very sinister-looking woman and a couple of children materialised from the gloom of an inner chamber, but we found it impossible to establish contact with them, though when Socrates arrived it was surprising and reassuring to see his sister so far unbend as to laugh and almost dig him

in the ribs. But towards us she remained implacable to the last.

We afterwards learned that the ladies Z. had not infelicitously described the room E. was to sleep in as a hencoop. These bowers are built out like huge balconies over streets and backyards, or, as at Meteora, over sheer precipices. Through the boards of the floor E. had the advantage of being able to watch the saddling up of our mules, and the walls were built of bamboo uprights several inches apart behung with strips of book muslin to ensure privacy. The beds were hammocks hung on wooden frames, and of course had gradually assumed the shape of boats ; in the centre you nearly touched the floor, and your legs stuck out over the framework at the end like twin bowsprits. Across the ceiling, which was made of thin sacking and muslin, cats prowled and fowls strutted all night in endless procession, while rats, invisible but countless, flew up and down the walls, close, close beside your head. Being of Greek extraction none of these creatures seemed to require sleep. The night we arrived a cold stormy wind was blowing, and that bower rose and fell like a ship on the sea, the muslin walls bellying like sails. In spite of all which, after an excellent dinner of good soup, tender fowl, no vegetables, uneatable bread, and our own wine, we went to bed in our clothes and slept profoundly.

Our breakfast tea next morning, though served in

a saucepan, turned out to be excellent. The day was dull and hot, and we found the two and a half hours' ride to the Temple of Bassae (called Phigalia in the British Museum) rough and tiring, in fact much of the track was unrideable. Bassae disappointed me. Knowing it had been built by Ictinus, the architect of the Parthenon, I had pictured to myself a temple that, like Segesta in Sicily, would lure you from afar—a potent, compelling fact, whether seen thus or at close quarters. On the contrary, it is in a cup on the top of the hill, and I cannot think that the approach to it, no matter from what quarter, can ever have been impressive, for you do not see it till you are actually on the spot. Perhaps when it was a mass of colour a gleam may have been caught from this or that cleft in these wild, lonely mountains ; but to-day, the colour having of course disappeared centuries ago, it reveals itself as built of the same coarse grey stone as the hill it stands on, whereas the material of Paestum and Segesta, not to speak of the glorious marble Parthenon, though equally ill-used by time, is beautiful in itself. The real trouble, however, with Bassae is that the pediments are gone, and a temple without pediments is like a face without eyebrows. I have seen antique pictures of it in the British Museum showing sweeps of sea in the distance ; but though on the way thither you catch sight of the Gulf of Arcadia now and again, I rather doubt whether it could ever be seen from the temple itself,

English Photographic Company, Athens.

THE APOLLO TEMPLE AT BASSAE.

gorgeous as the view must be in less hot, dusty weather. To disregard strict veracity in sketching Bassae would be fairly safe even to-day, for few people go there, and these may not see your sketches!

Lunch was eaten for once on the precise spot indicated by Ghiolman in our programme, that is, in the precincts of the temple, and consisted of horrible chicken sandwiches, made probably of the ancient stewed-out bird that had yielded us soup the night before, washed down with tepid wine and water. While we were lunching, a negative miracle happened; the old, terribly gouty curator, who had emerged from an adjacent shed and hobbled about a little in the background, did *not* now approach and inspect us and our revolting meal. Such was his isolation up here, seeing perhaps for months together no one but stray children shepherding flocks, that the strongest impulse of his race, gregariousness, seemed to be extinct in his bosom; and thankful as we were at being allowed for once to eat in peace, the discretion, the indifference, of that old martyr left rather a tragic impression in our minds, as of one who himself had gradually become, like the temple, a grey stone ruin.

When we got back to Andritsaena, to our astonishment a party was established on the balcony—the only tourists we had seen in the Peloponnesus except the Z.'s—consisting of a Cambridge don, his wife, and his wife's brother. They had crossed Taygetos in

glorious weather after a night at Tripi, where they slept three in a loft at Mr. Aspiotis's private house, the Z.'s being installed below them in our Saint Ursula bedroom, and very full of the horrors of the Kalamata Hotel—on the principle, I suppose, of shooting first, for, as I said, this is one of the best hotels in Greece. After tea, the dons (for all three seemed learned and the brother spoke modern Greek fluently) went off to inspect, O wonder ! the Municipal Library, to which a valuable collection of old books had recently been bequeathed by a native who made a fortune in America and, dying, remembered the land of his fathers. This sort of thing, utterly astonishing when you think of the primitive conditions of the country to-day, is constantly happening in Greece. It turned out that the books were of no great interest, not at least judged by Cambridge standards, and so we were well advised in deciding to stop quietly on the balcony watching the sunset rather than join the inspecting party.

These tourists seemed to know who I was, and had been informed that I was giving a concert at Andritsaena at 5 P.M. ! When they pointed out that it was now 5.15 and that we had not yet returned from Bassae, the reply was that the concert had been postponed to 6 P.M. ! The don's wife told us that news, whether true or false, travels in Greece as it does in the desert at a perfectly unaccountable rate, and that you never know how rumours are started. True, I had

claimed in hotel registers to be a musician, and I had sung on the way to Bassae; but the notion of giving a concert in Andritsaena was exceedingly funny, as any one who has been there will allow,—particularly if the lady performer-in-chief is clad in very old breeches.

These travellers saw a bit of the country we missed; they had motored from Megalopolis railway station, from which there is actually a road to Andritsaena that passes through the fantastic fortress town of Karytaena and also through a most beautiful gorge. I had wanted to see this place, but if you are tied for time something has to be sacrificed, and for nothing would we have missed the walk from Diavolitsi. No one seemed to know what becomes later on of this grand motoring road. I suppose it was meant to lead eventually to Pyrgos or some other port on the west coast, but like many similar plans was never carried to a conclusion. Throughout this part of our march we were continually coming across sections of yet another unused road that circled round hills we and our animals crossed in a straight line; what idealist, we asked ourselves, started these schemes in a country as irrevocably committed to mule-transport as the Peloponnesus?

We thought the married don looked very ill, and that night, or rather next morning about 4.30 A.M., when life began to stir in the house, his wife came to ask if we had any medicaments, as her unfortunate

husband had been seized with dysentery. Luckily E. was able to produce chlorodyne. The dons were by way of going to see Bassae that day and riding to Olympia the next, but it was evident that the thing could not be, and when we met them a week later we learned that that poor man had spent three days in bed in a place less suitable to be ill in than any habitation that we had yet come across, except perhaps Mr. Aspiotis's private house. There was a doctor available, however, at Andritsaena, which would not have been the case, I imagine, at Tripi, and he wished to bleed the patient, but was not gratified. In such haphazard fashion are chances dealt out! Why did this not happen to me, who have always wished to meet a doctor strong-minded enough to adopt the methods of our forefathers? Meanwhile, I think one may establish as an axiom that none save people with ostrich-like digestions can travel in the interior of Greece with impunity—as I had already found out to my cost at Tripi.

ANDRITSAENA *TO* OLYMPIA

THE START for Olympia was fixed for 6 A.M. The muleteers had told us the journey would take fourteen hours, and that we must start at 5, otherwise we might risk finding that the ferryman who takes one across the Alpheos just below Olympia had gone home for the night. But Socrates had assured us this was nonsense ; that muleteers always try to talk you into an early start, that the ferryman would be informed by telephone that he was to wait for us, and that our journey would improbably take more than thirteen hours. (As a matter of fact, without hurrying in the least it took us twelve and a half hours.) So we rose leisurely at about 5.30 A.M., and in the course of a plucky raid into the family haunts in search of hot water or a jug or something, I caught sight of a companion picture to E.'s vision at Tripi—Mrs. Ambriotis, another lady, and several children reclining on obscure bedding in the darkest corner of an inner chamber. *She* wasn't going to bother about us, but left it all to her husband and Socrates.

I had specially bargained that the remains of a tender fowl from last night's dinner be reserved for to-day's sandwiches, instead of which all we got, beside our own sardines, were disgusting hunks of lamb

—part, no doubt, of a good animal spoiled by impossible cooking. As we were now returning to civilisation we left some excellent butter, the thing English tourists chiefly prize, for the dons, and subsequently learned they had never received it. Half a bottle of our good wine had survived all, and when I asked in dumb show the way to the pump in order to fill it up with water, Ambriotis, with a gallant " pray allow me " gesture, whipped off into the next room with the bottle and was caught by me taking it down from his mouth and hastily spitting out an abstracted sample. I suppose he was disgusted to find it was nothing more interesting than non-resinous Greek wine ; anyhow, when I indignantly snatched away my property and attended to the matter myself he was not at all abashed. Parting was in this case sweet sorrow, for we were not wholly pleased with the Ambriotis family, and later on told Ghiolman so. As we clattered out of the yard, a phantom stole furtively from the hillside and slipped past us into the house ; it was the poor unfortunate don, whose drawn face was ghastly to behold in the starlight.

On that ride to Olympia, for the day was perfect, we reached the summit of our Greek rapture. At every range of hills you cross, a new world of colour reveals itself, and, as happens with great works of art, no formula exactly fits. The landscape is circumscribed, yet immense ; the line of Erymanthos and other mountains, of which we had seen the northern side from the

FIGURE REPRESENTING KLADEOS (THE RIVER THAT JOINS THE ALPHEOS AT OLYMPIA), FROM THE EAST PEDIMENT OF THE ZEUS TEMPLE, OLYMPIA.
(Fratelli Alinari, Florence.)

slopes of Parnassus, is stern yet ravishing. This may be a personal impression, but on one point all, I think, must be agreed ; namely, that the beauty of a Grecian landscape, its austerity, economy, and distinction, is of the same quality as the beauty in Greek literature, even if only known, as is the writer's sad case, in translations. I can quite understand that people accustomed to the strength of Italian tones might begin by finding Greece poor in colour, just as to one nursed on Shakespeare and Keats a Greek epigram might at first seem nothing but a bald statement. Later on, when one has come to see in these poems the supreme word of art, it is only by an effort of memory that one recalls early stumblings on the threshold of initiation, and is able to exercise self-restraint, when some casual tourist remarks : " Didn't you find the scenery in Greece disappointing ? So very grey, and rocky, and bare ! "

Yet on this particular day even such a one must have been converted, if only because of the intoxicating smell of herbaceous things that was with us from morning till evening. At last, too, we found ourselves in a region of fantastic woods—huge deodar-like trees from the branches of which hung tufts of foliage like very fine, pale green hair ; there were oaks too, and beeches, and myrtle, and the heart ached to think how an ignorant peasantry has shorn this lovely country of its glory. It was one of those days when the first young violence of summer has begun but not yet

turned to tyranny, and the result was a riot of wild flowers—of all Nature—through which we passed in ecstasy. On the top of every rise you caught the gleam of that great hero of legend, the river Alpheos, and beyond him towered on the sky-line his snow-capped parents. Yes; that heavenly day yielded the best of all our walks, and it was only fitting that in its course we at last came upon a tortoise. My muleteer, who had had his young, fluffy, dark beard shaved off in Andritsaena and looked a dream of beauty in consequence (he was much pleased, by-the-by, at my noticing the change), picked up the tortoise and, evidently in a spirit of humanity, put it up on a wall. This action I could not quite understand, for surely climbing up and down walls cannot be the strong suit of tortoises? However, there it was, and perhaps still is.

We lunched divinely in a pine wood, not far from a stream, on horrible lamb, sardine-sandwiches, magnificent oranges—these were always good—and "hard"-boiled eggs compared to which the stream was solid; and in a little village farther on we got as usual excellent Turkish coffee. Our two personal attendants had been from the first a little short with the old sumpter muleteer, sending him on, for instance, in charge of the whole caravan when they themselves had received permission to stop and have a drink at some wayside shanty, and generally acting as superiors to an inferior. This behaviour we countered, much to the surprise of all three of them, by treating him with

extra courtesy—also to specially large portions of our remains and extra helpings of resin and water. I must add that when E. and I were walking, which was the case most of that day—for under the influence of that air, even *I*, as Ghiolman had predicted, became impervious to fatigue—our two body servants would often jump on to our mules, whereas the old man never took his feet off the ground except to walk all day long. Now, suddenly, a little soldier turned up from nowhere in particular, hoisted himself on to the top of the sumpter mule's complicated burden and calmly rode in state all the way to Olympia. This sight filled us with indignation ; if any one rode it should surely be that lame old man ; but even if we had been able to convey our thought, it is useless to try and impose for five minutes your superior ethical system on people who are quite satisfied with their own. So we let it be, but that old man remains for us a symbol of patient endurance.

At a place called Greca we were accosted with loud familiarity by one of those horrible Greeks I have mentioned who have been to America and, returning, spend their time bragging about their experiences and abusing the land of their birth. I believe that in Ireland there are American Irish who afford an exact parallel. This individual began by asking the amazed E. if she was a professor, but we afterwards learned this term is applied to students who are financed by organisations for archaeological research. I daresay the mem-

bers of the German Turn-Verein whose singing had ravished us in Sparta belonged in this category more or less ; and I believe that few except " professors " travel as roughly as E. and I did. Conversation with these debased Greeks is a monologue and runs on these lines : " Where you come from? You American? America good place, by Gard ! I there ten years, by Gard—all right." Luckily the speaker is too much preoccupied with showing off his English to require answers, nor would he understand them if he got them; so to remove oneself from his odious presence is an easy task.

Towards evening we found ourselves on the banks of the Alpheos, a magnificent river, finer even than the Peneus. Waiting beside the ferry-boat were a coquettish flapper and her brother, a stolid brass-hatted scholar. Greece is a poor country, but the amount of gold lace lavished on the caps of these secondary school lads would put an English staff officer to shame. After two of our mules and ourselves had successfully boarded the straining ferry-boat, proceedings were held up by an interminable dispute between the girl and her brother ; we saw it was about money, and think she may have been trying to make him pay for them both, for the ferryman took little or no part in the fray and assumed an air of studied indifference. Eventually I lost patience, and by voice and gesture commanded them to have done with it and come on board at once.

We four passengers sat in the stern, two of the men minding the mules, whose heads were exactly on a level with ours. And now an elaborate scene of coquetry was staged for the benefit of my handsome muleteer by the flapper, who emitted little shrieks of terror and implored him to protect her from the long yellow teeth of my mule, who, I must say, was yawning in a very odd manner. Possibly he was feeling sea-sick, for owing to the violence of the current the boat was jerking and swaying a good deal, so that landing on the other side was something of an adventure. In fact, the mountains were getting rid of the freshly fallen snow that had been the splendour of our horizon throughout the day. We watched with anxiety the fetching across of the second boat-load, including E.'s animal, a grey pony this time, who utterly refused to commit herself to the deep ; and we thought the muleteers dealt with her case very stupidly, merely whacking and dragging at the plunging little fool, no one trying the effect of a little patting and encouragement. Once she was in the boat, however, she behaved like a reasonable pony and got out without any fuss.

This drama was entirely disregarded by our young lady, who the very instant she landed had embarked with simple dignity on a complete metamorphosis, which included a change into white stockings, the unblushing peeling off of an upper garment, and finally the flinging over her thick shoulders of a very smart cape unpacked from a brown paper parcel. Except for

an occasional glance of rooted aversion, the brother disassociated himself entirely from these proceedings. We afterwards learnt there was a dance in the town of Olympia, and I have no doubt this accounted for my muleteer shaving off his beard ; but E. and I hoped and trusted that, in spite of the preliminary mining operations on the boat, that odious maiden would not succeed in capturing his fancy.

We reached our destination at 6.45 P.M., and on parting from our attendants gave the old man such an unexpectedly large tip—that is, exactly what we gave the others—that he was overwhelmed and doubled himself up in a series of profound bows, wildly kissing our hands between each bow. We were glad his companions should see what we thought of him.

The Chemin de Fer Hotel at Olympia is the best hotel we stayed at in Greece ; first-rate cooking and, at last, good organisation. But even here, though the Alpheos is but a stone's-throw away, baths were out of the question, nor were there means inside or outside the hotel of getting your shoes cleaned. But E., who had a complete shoeblack's outfit with her, remedied that defect. The whole place is run by the landlord, an immensely capable but not very sympathetic personality, who looked about a hundred and told me he slept only four hours in the twenty-four. When we arrived after this walk of twelve and a half

Fratelli Alinari, Florence.

DEIDAMEIA AND CENTAUR FROM THE WEST PEDIMENT OF THE ZEUS TEMPLE AT OLYMPIA.

hours, E. said, " I should not in the least mind going for another two hours " ; and such is the miraculous effect of Greek oxygen, that I was able with absolute truth to answer, " Nor should I ".

All the same we went to bed at 8.30 and slept till 7 A.M. next morning, but in the course of that night fresh evidence was afforded that with the Greeks conversation takes the place of meat, drink, and sleep. This hotel, like all hastily-run-up places of the kind, is very resonant, and about 11.30 P.M. I was roused from slumber by such an uproar of talk and laughter in the lounge hard by that I rose and, clad in an old waterproof, my bare feet in slippers, stalked past the astonished revellers in search of the landlord, whom I found doing accounts by the light of one candle at the far end of the huge dining-room. He told me these people, including the three ladies of the party, were departing early next morning—namely, by the one train that leaves Olympia by day, and which starts at 4.30 A.M.—*so that probably they did not think it worth while to go to bed at all!!* Seeing he was not disposed to interfere, I addressed the group myself with a pathos slightly marred, perhaps, by my costume, and nothing could be more charming than the response. They all disappeared into their respective bedrooms and the hotel became as silent as the grave.

The day we spent at Olympia (April 22) the weather was hot and dull, and we found the ruins more painfully archaeological than ever. The sight of these

gigantic prone temples had the same depressing effect on me as the like spectacle at earthquake-ravaged Selinonte; and, here as there, the drums of the columns, lying side by side, are still in line, just as would happen if a child slowly tipped over a toy temple. But why had no one ever told us that until you have seen the Hermes of Praxiteles you do not know what Greek sculpture must have been? Perhaps one *had* been told, but none listens till the hour for listening has come. Like every one else, I knew him in plaster casts and copies, and had hated this barber's block of a god and the homunculus baby on his arm. Seen as he really is, the marble so marvellously preserved by the soft black mud of Alpheos as to be more like transcendental human flesh than marble, it produced in us—and I feel sure this must be a common experience—a passion of admiration and wonder such as no manifestation of art has ever produced in me except in the realm of music. I also wondered why one had not heard more from friends about the sculptures from the pediments of the Zeus temple, which I confess in some ways stir me more deeply than the Elgin Marbles; perhaps because they are more human.

When one hears nonsense talked about giving back the Elgin Marbles to Greece, it is well to remember that huge cracks have opened out in the walls of the museum at Olympia. The Hermes has been removed from his pedestal there and housed for

Lapith Woman from the West Pediment of the Zeus Temple at Olympia.
(Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar, Marburg.)

safety in a little shanty all by himself, but it is terrible to think of that wonderful company from the pediments at the mercy of the next really big earthquake. Later on I rubbed this point in at Athens to some Greek acquaintances who, ever so gently and discreetly, referred to the " reparation " plans with which the newspapers in England and Greece were busy just then. How can one venture to hope that a people in whom the habit of letting things slide is so deeply engrained will take steps in time about even pressing matters such as the Zeus pediment statues ? And what are we English if not custodians for the world in general of the Elgin Marbles ? However full of sympathy and admiration you may be for modern Greece, I think there should be no ambiguous speaking on this point.

Towards evening, while we were seated on the wooded heights above the Alpheos, hypnotised by a view in which the river is of course chief protagonist, the frogs, after a little preliminary tuning-up, suddenly burst into a concert on such an unprecedented scale that E. could not believe it was only frogs. Almost any composer would have been tempted to work these quite novel sonorities into an Aristophano-symphonic poem, but the thought of having to get up to-morrow at 3.30 A.M. is not an inspiring one, and that work has never been written.

FROM OLYMPIA, *VIA* MEGASPELEION *AND* CORINTH, *BACK TO* ATHENS

OUR NEXT day's programme involved breakfasting at 4 A.M. After the glorious open-air life we had been leading, a twelve hours' railway journey, from 5 A.M. to 5 P.M., is rather a trying prospect, but our destination, Megaspeleion, was worth an effort. This monastery, one of the richest in Greece, and which has always been the centre of every effort to throw off the Turkish yoke, is connected by a cogwheel railway with the line that runs along the south side of the Gulf of Corinth, and when we reached the junction, Diacophto, having already lunched in the train at 10.30, it was tantalising to find a grand hot meal going on in the open-air railway café.

As for the beauties of the gorge at the head of which the monastery stands, the breath of the writer who describes them in "The Archaeological Greece" has been miraculously prolonged by enthusiasm. Thus in a passage wildly denuded of stops we read of "A funicular railway ascending up to 900 metres passing through the wild overgrown with plane trees and chestnut trees narrow torrent of Vowraico river falling in different places in small cataracts". . . . Unless

you are bound for the mountain terminus, Kalavryta, you are met by mules at the station for Megaspeleion, some 800 feet below the monasteries, and either ride or walk up to Hôtel Chelmos, thus called after the big mountain behind it.

While having tea at the hotel whom should we see doing likewise at another table but some of the party I had herded to bed at Olympia, a charming Greek lawyer on tour with his wife and sister-in-law. They were still talking hard, and seemed to bear no malice for my peevish behaviour and absurd predilection for spending the night in sleep; on the contrary, we found them most ready to answer all sorts of questions we were glad to have a chance of putting to intelligent people. Abroad one often feels how different things look on the spot to what one would suppose, judging by " our foreign correspondent's " version in the English newspapers; so, by way of corrective to some of our fixed notions, I will give certain views of our new friend which we found were shared by other intelligent Greeks, and even by Mr. Woodley.

This lawyer was a hot royalist, and informed us that the bulk of the Greeks and the whole of the Peloponnesus were of like mind to himself. According to him Venizelos was an intriguer who had always wanted to get rid of the King and become dictator. When the Great War came he saw his chance, subsidised the Press, and represented Tino to be a pro-

German. This, said our friend, was not true ; he had always foreseen the inevitable victory of the Allies and was merely biding his time in order to get the best possible terms for Greece. But Venizelos took in all the allied Governments with his pose of patriot statesman and in the end bested the King. Meanwhile, having done for himself for ever with the Greeks, this astute politician had now retired to Paris, where, though he still had a mysterious hold on the foreign Press, he and his intrigues were in course of being found out by the French. He further informed us that the present heir is a good fellow, aged about 34 (one was glad to learn these details, for the track of deposed royalties is apt to get lost in the sands of democracy and revolution), and that he himself, our lawyer, was prepared to bet anything that in three or four years Greece will once more be a kingdom. It is quite good fun to jot down all this for what it is worth and watch whether his prophecy comes true.

The Hôtel Chelmos, at which I spent my birthday, April 23rd, is as magnificently placed as any hotel in Greece—I think in that respect it even beats the hotel at Delphi—but it is very badly run. The monasteries are amazing, hacked deep into vertical rock, with the odd, swallows' nest projections of lath and plaster described in connection with the private house of Mr. Ambriotis. I have never beheld such gorgeous workmanship as there is in the church—more especially the shrine of the miraculous Virgin—and the

value of the treasures they possess in the way of vestments, jewels, and illuminated missals is said to be past reckoning. E. and I had rather lingered over our tea, and by the time we arrived, the padre, a grave, handsome, saintly-looking priest, was half-way through exhibiting and explaining these wonders to a group of Easter visitors. But he instantly began all over again for our edification, the lawyer acting as interpreter—an instance of the courtesy which seems innate in Greeks of all ranks. We also were shown a wine-vat so enormous that I am glad my notes of its dimensions have been lost, for no one would believe them.

We had been told that Megaspeleion is as astonishing a place as Meteora. To this we cannot subscribe. It is richer in ecclesiastical treasures, and gorgeously situated; but compared to the other place it is accessible and well known, facts which lessen its charm. The geological upheaval which ensures for ever the splendid isolation of Meteora is a miracle not likely to happen often; Athos may rival it perhaps, but surely no other place.

Next morning the lawyer's party demonstrated afresh the physical fitness and enterprise of their race. They, like ourselves, were departing after breakfast by train, and would not reach their bourne, Athens, till all hours of the night; nevertheless they got up at 6 A.M. and walked to the top of the pass above us for the sake of the view over the Gulf of Corinth

which cannot be seen from Megaspeleion. If the ladies had been equipped in the style of E. and me it would have been less surprising, but they were clad in elegant Athens confections, carried beauty-bags the contents of which were evidently in constant requisition, and above all were ready to negotiate as rough a path as even Greece can provide in smart pointed shoes with high heels. A wonderful people indeed! E. and I, perhaps a little blasé after our late exploits, were content to crawl up to a point whence you could get a satisfactory sight of a big round rock balanced on the extreme edge of the precipice above the monasteries, of which legend relates that just as the Turks had got it swaying and were about to send it hurtling on the heads of the Christians below, the Abbot of Megaspeleion held up his hand; whereupon the rock threw out roots, and the Turks, who, as a matter of fact, never once succeeded in getting a footing in this important stronghold, fled in dismay.

Our departure from Megaspeleion was as characteristically Greek as anything can be. When the cogwheel train we stood watching, as it glided down from the mountain above, pulled up beside us, its two coaches were found to be so crammed with people that not one other human being could be taken on board, let alone the twenty or thirty who were waiting on the platform; and as sole comfort we were told that another train would "probably" come down presently from Kalavryta. Of course we

all, led by the lawyer, proceeded to make a demonstration; the phone was put into action, and by-and-by another train really did arrive, consisting of two open trucks in which we arranged our luggage as seats. You had to be careful not to dash your brains out on projecting rocks ; otherwise to have a chance of travelling down that beautiful gorge in an open truck was a great piece of good fortune—especially at a certain place where two huge, long bastions approach so close to each other that you would say the engineers had not left room enough for a wheelbarrow to pass, let alone a train. Here the frantic torrent that had been our companion all the way suddenly becomes invisible ; and these courteous officials stopped the train of their own accord so that we might hear the water dashing through the cleft some 150 feet below us with a roaring as of more than 150 infuriated lions.

We arrived in the course of the afternoon at Corinth, our next halting-place, just in time to have a stroll along the seashore before dinner and conceive a well-founded fear that the weather next day would behave as it generally had done hitherto when our hearts were set on a particular view. For of course from Acro-Corinth you get the panorama of the whole northern coast of the gulf, including the best of all views of Parnassus. On our return to the hotel, as E. went on to the balcony, a vehicle drove up, and out of it stepped a young lady who, after looking about

her with disgust, said in the slowest of American drawls to an invisible companion inside the cab : " I —won't—stay—in—this—damned—damp—place ". It was Mrs. and Miss Z. ! Unfortunately they not only did stay in the place thus qualified, but at our hotel, and the elder lady accosted us with exactly the breeding you would expect in one with her record, assuring me that she had been " tickled to death " by my very commonplace remark to her on the Langada Pass. I said some pages back that E.'s behaviour to a harmless young man in the train had revealed to me unsuspected depths of cruelty in an otherwise amiable character. It was now her turn to be dumbfounded at the frigidity wherewith her aunt repelled Mrs. Z.'s ill-advised advances,—to forthwith become absorbed in a book. That meal was an unpleasant one, not only because of the presence of these people. One result of the ascetic habits of the Greeks is that their restaurants are thronged with mangy, half-starved dogs and cats, but this one harboured still more unpleasant beggars, namely, a swarm of disgusting tame rabbits such as are the pride of the theatre at Epidauros.

To have done, once for all, with the Z.'s (whom we afterwards met in our hotel at Athens, to be coldly greeted by the mother and cut dead by the daughter), I will just add that their case continues to engage me. The labels on their stack of boxes in the passage showed that they had been in every sort of out-of-the-way place, and I have already commented on their

E. Wasmuth, Berlin.

ACRO-CORINTH AND REMAINS OF A DORIC TEMPLE.

spirited tackling of the Langada Pass on that terrible day. The daughter was a tall, handsome girl, though something—possibly an ill-starred love affair—had soured her temper ; the two were evidently excellent friends, and E. overheard them discussing the orders of Greek architecture with animation and intelligence. Yet there is no doubt whatever that as regards certain fundamental instincts they were no better than savages. And there one must leave the problem.

Next day, as we had feared would be the case, the view from Acro-Corinth was practically non-existent, and nothing but the roots of Parnassus were visible. Still the climb was well worth while, because you then realise what a striking demonstration of Nature this sudden mountain is, but above all because of the wild flowers. These are of a quite other variety to what we had seen well inland, particularly a terra-cotta six-leaved poppy which grows together with the usual blood-red kind, and combines with white, yellow, and blue anemones and orchids to produce an effect so ludicrously like a Turkey carpet that it made you think of Wilde's paradox about Nature imitating art. The remains of the temple on the site of Old Corinth are far more poetic and effective than anything I had been prepared for; indeed, the sight of it brought back a certain stanza in Byron's "Siege of Corinth" so vividly, that the whole of this poem—the only long one I know by heart, to repeat which to oneself in bed is an

infallible cure for insomnia—was inflicted during the ascent upon my accommodating companion.

We had driven the dull, dusty four miles between the new town and the site of Old Corinth in a fly—a sad come-down after our recent modes of travel—and, returning, gave a lift to a young Greek who had begged this boon of our coachman. He told us he had been a student at Leeds University for three years and had attended all the lectures, this information being imparted in almost incomprehensible pidgin English ; and when we perceived that he scarcely understood one word of what we said in reply, remembering the horrors of the American Greek's jargon, and the rather halting and circumscribed French of our Thessalian railway inspector, we came to the perhaps hastily formed conclusion that Greeks who stay in Greece, though abnormally fluent masters of their own language, are otherwise not good linguists.

In the train that bore us back to Athens that afternoon we once more met the Cambridge party, and learned the already recorded experiences of the sick man in the wilds of Central Greece. As we crawled slowly up the isthmus happened the most wonderful sunset effect we had yet seen. This time it was the spectacle of the coast-line round about and beyond Epidauros ; of the isles from Salamis to Hydra that lay to the east of us ; of the isthmus itself as we rounded bay after bay and got a view of the land behind us ; of the all-embracing sea ; of everything on

earth and in heaven turned into one shimmering hundred-tinted mass of gold. You could not believe but that it was a dream—could not believe that the witnessing of this scene had been vouchsafed by a Providence hitherto not well disposed towards us in the matter of views, but which now, at the last, was relenting on this royal scale. . . . " At the last " ; for though the dust of Corinth had warned us that our pilgrimage had been planned not a day too early in the year, one's heart ached to think we were now on the threshold of the last lap.

A RURAL WEDDING *NEAR* ATHENS

AT ATHENS a great shock awaited us—news of the death of J. S. Sargent, the great painter, who had been a close friend of many in my family for a quarter of a century. He had drawn E.'s portrait just before we started for Greece, and had specially urged us at the cost of any effort to see Meteora. Our letters to my sister—E.'s grandmother—had interested and excited him to such a degree that he declared he must go to Greece again himself by-and-by! Curiously enough, this portrait being intended as a birthday present for E., it was antedated by him: "15th April" —the day after his own death!

One cannot conceive of a more wonderful end than his. As full of energy, as completely master of his powers, whether as creator or participator in life, as ever he was, to have just finished and personally superintended the shipment of the work of his which, I always think, interested him more than any other, the decorations for the Boston Library; and then, on the eve, almost, of following his work to America, to be found one morning early by his servant, to all appearance quietly asleep in his bed, a volume of Voltaire still in his hand. . . . Who can desire a more perfect death for himself or others?

Portrait of Elizabeth Williamson ("E.") by John Sargent, R.A.

The first thing we did in Athens was to go back to the National Museum. Hitherto we had always passed through the Schliemann rooms that most big museums possess with comparative indifference ; now, after having visited Mykene and been brought otherwise nearer, if only by a perhaps imaginary Minoan road in South Greece, to this prehistoric civilisation, these exhibits became objects of burning interest ; and we gazed with stupefaction at works of art such as a certain goblet round which rages a hunt more madly, more delicately alive than anything you could hope to see fashioned to-day. The supreme value of it all seems to me this : that, looking at these things, you realise that the description of Menelaus's palace in the *Odyssey*, for instance, is probably quite as accurate as the description in an auctioneer's catalogue of some Elizabethan mansion. Both indulge perhaps in a little hyperbole, but the main lines are more or less true to fact. So at least one likes to think.

On Sunday, April 26, the Woodleys offered to take us out into the country to see a real rural wedding, the marriage of the foreman of his works to a young lady he had long courted. When we reached the spot about 10 A.M. our first shock was the discovery that for reasons of economy the wedding would not take place in the church but in the house of the bride's father. This house was on one side of an open *place* which in England would have been the village green,

but which here could only be called the village yellow, for there was no grass on it, only sand. Every one except the bridegroom, a dark, pleasant-faced man about thirty-five, was in great perturbation, for neither the priest nor the best man, who in Greece seems by far the most important person at a wedding, had yet arrived, and we understood that the bride was in floods of tears in an inner chamber and being consoled by her mother. None the less the circle of chairs outside the house was occupied by wholly cheerful wedding guests, and the first instalment of soup, lamb, vegetables, pudding, sweetmeats, and wine (for food was handed round and partaken of at short intervals throughout the day) was absorbed by the English section as best it could.

Meanwhile lighter entertainment was not lacking, for another wedding that had started some hours previously was now running its course at the lower end of the square—which square tilted downwards from the despised and ineffectual church at a smart angle. This wedding had now reached the stage of dancing, if anything so lifeless, unrhythmic, interminable, and deadly dull can be thus described. Here and there some one would sketch a languid step or two, and one dancer, evidently a little keyed up, made a brave attempt to put a little go into the proceedings ; but he soon gave it up as a bad job, and was presently in passionate converse with two or three old men—a far more lively amusement than attempting to kindle

these stolidly virtuous maidens. Of course 10 A.M. is not an inflammable hour, but Mr. Woodley said that if one came back at 10 P.M.—that is, at what would still be the early stages of a twenty-four hours' entertainment—one would not see much difference in the moral temperature. What accentuated the gloom of the proceedings was that every one was in reach-me-downs, except the bride, whose white garment suggested a degenerate descendant of some charming national wedding costume.

As for the music, it was even worse than what I had heard by the Greek contingent in the restaurant at Sparta, worse than anything even England can vamp up towards the close of a Bank Holiday. At work were a clarinet player, a violinist, and a person who aimlessly, and at long intervals, thumped some sort of broken instrument of the zither family, and the noise produced had no more connection with the dreary hoppings and circlings of the dancers than with the birds of the air or the fishes of the sea. Mr. Woodley told us this performance would go on till long past midnight; and indeed, reduced almost to tears by the indescribably pointless tedium of the display, one saw no reason why it should ever stop at all. How capriciously the gifts of the gods are bestowed! In the meanest Hungarian or Roumanian village what entrancing music would grace such an occasion!—and here this sloppy travesty of a divinely vertebrate art!

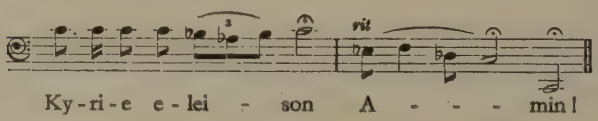
To go back to our own wedding: the priest, a jolly old man, had meanwhile turned up and was being made much of; all the more so, perhaps, as he was only a refugee priest from Asia Minor and therefore cheap. Possibly it was for this reason that he forebore to unfold his stole and wore it twisted round his neck like a dirty blue silk bath towel. But the best man was still lacking, and the agitation at his inexplicable delay was becoming distressing when shouts and cheers heralded the approach of a powerful car, which, after tearing across the *place* and coming to a very abrupt halt, disgorged a fat, hilarious gentleman laden with candles, flowers, and two bridal wreaths with streamers. (A Greek bridegroom has to wear a chaplet, and often wears it over one eye, for when it gets crooked he is generally too self-conscious to put it straight again.) The chauffeur, who evidently had anticipated the elevation proper to such occasions, now parked his motor up at the top of the rise near the church, and returning among us was exchanging greetings with the bridal party, when the empty car was suddenly seen to be moving backwards in a direct line for the other wedding party. It gained speed as it approached them, and they were dispersing in all directions with shrieks when it crashed into an olive tree and came to a standstill. Small boys had been playing with the brake and this was the result. To show to what a high pitch feelings were wrought, let me say that the chauffeur, vociferating

curses, flew after and into his car, and then, turning it, headed full speed in our direction, not noticing that there was a two-foot drop into the road between him and us. It was now the turn of our wedding party to shriek, and the suicide was brought to a stop in time on the very brink of the precipice.

The rest of the proceedings were so extraordinary, and our minds thereby reduced to such a pulp, that one almost despairs of attempting a faithful chronicle, all the more so because the Woodleys, who of course had seen the thing again and again, seemed to take it all for granted. The day was stifling. We all crowded into the parlour, where we stood thick as blades of wheat, separated by a table from the chief protagonists, who included the now smiling but swollen-faced bride (I don't think she can have been a pretty girl even when at her best), and the clerk, a big man in a pepper-and-salt suit whose sacred character was indicated by a wisp of dingy embroidery round his neck. To E. and me, as strangers, were given places of distinction up against the table—a position much coveted by several objectionable little children who used their needle-like elbows on our persons in order to get nearer the huge dish of sugared almonds that formed the centrepiece.

The priest, who had never ceased laughing and joking with the company, now plunged into a long gabble punctuated by "Amins" from the clerk, thrown in, so it seemed to us, at random. Mr. Woodley

assured us the service was word for word the same as the Anglican rite, but there must have been a good deal besides that. All the time the congregation were laughing and talking, and there was one word frequently reiterated by the priest that never failed to produce a burst of merriment. Suddenly the bride's father leant forward, and almost shaking his fist in the priest's face bawled out something which provoked still more laughter; in fact the holy man himself laughed. Mr. Woodley afterwards explained to us that as all these people were strangers to him the priest had been tying up the bridegroom by a wrong name. At certain places where we imagined good advice was being given, the clerk would stare fixedly at whichever of the newly married couple was in question and drive home a quick, double-barrelled "Amin, Amin", with an emphasis that, as Mrs. Z. would have put it, "tickled the bystanders to death". The only part of the proceedings that impressed me favourably was a Kyrie eleison I cannot help quoting, which was sung now and then by the clerk, who had a very fine voice:



As a rule he stopped on the last note but one, but sometimes he would swoop down on to, and hold

for an incredible time, the last note of all. It gave one goose-skin.

At last came a moment when everybody made a dash at the bowl and began throwing sweetmeats at every one else, including the priest; at this point the children's behaviour became so unrestrained that E. and I fled into the open. That stage of the ceremony being over, a fresh instalment of food—the third, I think—was handed round, and the same dreary dancing we had already gazed at with despairing eyes over the way, now started on our side of the square, only in this case a guitar took the place of a broken zither; but the two chords used had just as little relation to the melodies they were allied to. By this time I had a splitting headache, so our kind friends, who seemed quite ready to sit there all day if we desired, took us back to Athens. And as this was not a final judgement I do not mind confessing that after the events of the day E. and I said sadly to each other: "No! the Greeks are *not* religious!"

POROS, AEGINA, *AND* LYCABETTUS

I THINK it was on the night of the rural wedding that the Woodleys gave us dinner at the Phaleron, a charming experience I suppose no visitor to Athens misses; and on the next day, April 28, took place the final and not the least delightful of our excursions —one in which the element of the unforeseeable was more than ever conspicuous—namely, the trip to the island of Aegina.

And now I am about to chronicle the only mistake made by us, which, I think, was Ghiolman's fault. On these occasions he always sent a car and an English-speaking henchman of his to fetch us and see us off; this time, knowing there would probably not be a soul in the steamer who could speak anything but Greek, knowing too that these boats have no settled way of behaving but follow the whim of the moment, I think he ought to have bid his man ask the captain to keep an eye on us and decant us safely at Aegina harbour. As no time-tables are published, how could we guess that some of these vessels simply ply between the Piraeus and Aegina, whereas others go on to various other islands off the Peloponnesian coast? Consequently, when, about half a mile off the island, we noticed that the engines had stopped, and

that a queer green fishing-boat had crept alongside and was taking off a few passengers, including a "papa", we merely remarked "Yet another rural wedding!" and languidly wondered what was the name of the little white town for which the green boat was now steering.

Our engines were once more going full speed ahead, when, to our dismay, we realised that instead of proceeding round the island to the spot where we fancied the town of Aegina must be we were heading in quite another direction. Alas! though of course no one had given us a hint to that effect, not even the man who clipped our tickets, the little white town was Aegina itself and we were now bound for an unknown place called Poros! By this time our fellow-passengers had grasped the situation, and the sympathy depicted on all countenances was succeeded by wonder at the peals of laughter with which we realised our plight. Frantically turning over the leaves of her Baedeker, E. announced that there was "no such place as Poros"; but in her agitation she was conning the Athens part of the index, and we were glad to gather what every one but ourselves knows, I daresay, that Poros is an island close to the Peloponnesian shore, and once the chief Greek naval station, though now relegated to the second place of honour. This accounted for the crowd of sailors on board and also gave us hope of finding a decent hotel.

Although the everlasting charm of the unforeseen

may have biassed us, I really believe the passion we conceived for this lovely spot—a wooded island separated from the mainland by a narrow but deep channel—is justified, and I cannot understand why it does not figure in ordinary plans of travel. Perhaps because it is devoid of classical remains. Yet a walk such as we took that evening on the mainland—a slow walk past gardens full of laden orange and lemon trees, up and down olive-wooded hills carpeted with a new set of wild flowers which as usual seemed to be more radiant than any we had seen hitherto (the fact being that one never gets accustomed to such profusion)—cannot such an experience be more intoxicating even than gazing at " fragments of stone reared by creatures of clay " ? (As these records are drawing to a close this is positively the last Byron quotation.)

I need not say we had begun by securing rooms at the most promising-looking of the two hotels. Seen from within it was less satisfactory, but as the price of a bed was 15 drachmas, that is about 2¼d., one could not complain. Also before starting for our walk E. had constructed, and after a third visit to the post office, which seemed deserted that day, succeeded in sending off a Greek telegram to the hotel at Aegina explaining that we should turn up on the morrow. Dinner was partaken of in a restaurant where the sailors eat ; also, I doubt not, the officers, but we saw none that evening. There was a long cooking range covered with steaming saucepans, and

the best, indeed the only plan, seemed to be to lift the lids and spear out anything you took a fancy to. At one moment I extracted something that was neither the fried fish I had taken it for nor the piece of hose-pipe it felt like when prodded with a fork, but simply a section of eel. Eels are much appreciated in Ireland; I tried a mouthful and—did the only thing that was to be done with it. . . . Up came the friendly landlord, cook, and waiter in one, signifying that he quite understood the case, and presently I saw him sweeping the contents of that plate back into the saucepan. I hope and trust it was only the inviolate portion of the eel, but, as we had found out, in these matters Greeks take the larger view. I think the post office must be the only place at Poros that ever shuts; anyhow, when we went to bed at 10.30 all the shops were open, and we bought a packet of delicious Turkish Delight at a hardware establishment on the quay.

Our breakfast next morning, for in the hotel not even hot water to wash in could be had, was collected all down the sea-front. At the baker's we bought an oblong loaf that would have fed a regiment, price one farthing; at another shop we bought eggs, salt at a third, and all this we conveyed with our own tin of butter to a café where with the greatest difficulty we procured plates, knives, and spoons, and managed to get our eggs boiled, though our left hands had to

serve as egg-cups. A cup of coffee and goat's milk is all that even a Croesus among Greeks would dream of taking for breakfast, and we felt ashamed of a greediness which was noted respectfully, and I think admiringly, by the whole quayside.

The harbour was a dream of beauty in the morning light, and as we sat idly waiting for the Aegina boat, due in about three-quarters of an hour, we commented on the elegant appearance of a white yacht which had come in during the night and which we concluded must belong to the Navy, as so many sailors kept on tumbling into boats and scrambling hastily up her side. Suddenly E. exclaimed: "*Can that possibly be the Aegina boat? !*" Queried cries and desperate pointings on our part set bystanders' heads nodding affirmatively; our suitcases were hurled into a boat, and as we boarded that yacht she was already moving —more than half an hour before her proper time for starting; but who, as I have remarked more than once, can talk of such a thing as "proper time" in connection with Greece?

Now all Poros knew perfectly well that the two foreigners were proceeding to Aegina in that boat, yet either from casualness, lack of initiative, or shyness, not a soul drew our attention to what was happening! Such is travel in Greece. The explanation of it is that the local steamers sometimes draw up alongside the quay, sometimes anchor in mid-harbour, or, as had happened in our case the day before, pull

E. Wasmuth, Berlin.

Temple of Athena at Aegina.

up in mid-ocean. All one can say, as guide to fellow-travellers, is, that there is always some one who knows exactly what course a given boat will pursue and that that person is always wrong.

In this particular case we had another reason besides the charm of Poros for blessing the mischance that took us there. Proceeding from thence to Aegina we could catch sight of the shores of Troezen, scene of Theseus' terrible vengeance on Hippolytus, executed, in compliance with a rash promise, by Poseidon. Here rose out of the sea the gigantic bull, at the sight of which the chariot horses became unmanageable and dashed their driver to pieces on the rocks. It was difficult to credit those blue smiling waters with such a monstrous parturition.

Our guide-books had not prepared us adequately for the gorgeous situation of the Temple that dominates Aegina. The harbour is on the opposite side of the island, and that means a long walk (personally I did it " on mules-back ") and a gradual ascent through wonderful woods. It was a glorious day, and looking over towards the coast of Attica we recollected how some one, I think Pericles, had described this island so passionately coveted by and so inimical to the Athenians as " the eyesore of Athens ". Towards evening we strolled down to the harbour and witnessed a battle that was convulsing a group of small children, two of whom bore the astonishing but

doubtless quite commonplace names of Athena and Adonis.

Will it be believed that next morning, though we had an English-speaking landlord to keep us straight, we were all but left behind by the Athens boat? He had informed us with the greatest emphasis that she would draw up alongside the quay; once again nothing of the sort happened, and if we were saved at the very last moment from spending twenty-four hours more in Aegina we had ourselves, not him, to thank for it.

On board it became painfully evident that we were returning to civilisation, for a gramophone was in full blast. Fleeing as far as possible from its neighbourhood we found ourselves behind the wheel-box, in which were packed five sailors who were continuously and fervently chanting Kyrie Eleison in exactly the style of the clerk at the wedding. As they cannot have been doing this (as might have been the case with us) to drown the gramophone, there was now no reason for further postponing the answer to a vexed question; and as we love the Greeks and their country sincerely, it was with joy and triumph that we said to each other, "This settles it! the Greeks *are* religious!"

There is one more incident in connection with this trip which I should like to mention, because I found it rather surprising. When we landed that evening at the Piraeus, an exceedingly nice-looking man with rather a sad face insisted on helping us to carry our

suitcases to the Electric Railway Station for Athens. He spoke English rather badly, with an accent I could not quite identify, and when we parted absolutely refused a tip. " I saw you are English," he said, " and I like the English, so was glad to be of use to you." We found out he was a German married to an Englishwoman, and had been at Coventry—I suppose interned —during the whole war. But he evidently bore no malice, told us he was engaged on an engineering job at Samothrace, and intended as soon as it was over to go out to Australia, where they had " connections ". " It's no good going to England," he said; " I couldn't get anything worth having there " ; and when I asked if he could count on high wages in Australia he said he thought so, but that he would rather be moderately well off in an English colony than earning big money elsewhere. This, he said, was why he was leaving Greece, for his Samothrace job was very well paid and his employers quite ready to keep him on. I shall always think of this little incident with pleasure.

The next day we determined to try and hit off a good sunset on Mount Lycabettus, of which up to now we had only made a partial ascent. It was on this occasion that I specially noticed the hideous effect as heard from above of the unison hooters. On the summit there are a monastery and a café, the administration of which is so curiously intertwined that some people might consider the result shows lack of

reverence for sacred things ; but for us, if anything, these proceedings confirmed our now settled belief that the Greeks are fundamentally religious. Some sort of office was going on, probably vespers, and the café chairs were being continually carried into the church for religious purposes and whipped out again by an old clerk who looked very like a " papa " himself, and who alternately served drinks to clients and rushed back into the church to resume, with loud responses and swayings of a censer, his rôle as altar ministrant. The priest, a fine-looking old man who intoned magnificently, once touched the high super-tenor C with thrilling effect. As for the clerk-waiter, the miracle was that he managed, in spite of table thumpings without and ringings of bells within, not to get mixed as to his various duties. Now and again a jolly party of girls and boys who were having afternoon tea would drift into the church in an absent-minded manner, followed by E. and me, cross themselves, genuflex, and drift out again. And when the guests had finally departed all the chairs were carried back into the church, where the papa was still intoning musically, having in the meantime changed into a green cope. Truth to tell, the casualness of the wedding rite we had witnessed had left an unpleasant impression, but what we saw on Lycabettus was altogether sympathetic ; except of course the sunset, which, as ever, when we went forth with the express purpose of admiring it, was but a poor affair.

This was our very last experience as tourists in Greece, but before coming to a final chapter (which in a spirit of humility and irony combined might be entitled " General Conclusions ", and which will deal with an important point, the £ s. d. aspect of a priceless experience) I must just add that we went from the Piraeus to Brindisi in a spacious four-berth second-class cabin on one of the magnificent Lloyd Triestino steamers and identified with emotion various points on Odysseus's island as we sailed past it—an emotion qualified in my case by the fact that I believe in Samuel Butler's theory of the *Odyssey* being the work of a poetess who dwelt on the south coast of Sicily and is describing the scenery she saw out of her window. Anyhow the idea is surely not more fantastic than that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the work of one and the same man, as many hold to this day, I believe.

But why I really am referring to this sea trip is because of the two Greek ladies who shared our cabin. On the second night the sea became very rough. E. and I, too fit and well to be sea-sick, went to bed very late, but I think that before we retired the ladies had succumbed, and though the worst was over they were evidently far from happy. None the less, in the intervals of sighs and groans, and " oh's " and " ah's", such an interminable conversation was kept up between them, that at last, about midnight, I had to implore them to desist. I think this strikingly proves

the truth of a contention more than once advanced in these pages, that talk is still the master passion of the Greeks, and that herein, at least, they prove themselves to be the spiritual heirs of Socrates.

And finally, as very last impression of travel, I am bound to confess that as we sped up Italy—that country so dearly loved by us both—we became aware of a sense of disillusionment. To eyes trained to the austerer beauty they had been feeding on for weeks the landscape seemed almost vulgar ! . . .

CONCLUSIONS

I HAVE just been reading the above record of travel to a friend who is a writer and also a painter —but a little over-fastidious, perhaps, and not a lover of the classics. Her disconcerting comment was : " I should not say your account of Greece would exactly *encourage* people to go there ! " and she stoutly maintains that no amount of beauty could compensate for discomfort such as had to be faced.

Well, there are travellers and travellers, and as I began by saying, these pages are addressed to those who find it difficult even to notice the existence of drawbacks, unless to laugh about them, if a certain kind of beatitude is within your grasp. One might add, that probably the Grecian brand of beatitude can only be attained by those over whom ancient Greece, its history, its art, its literature, exercises a supreme spell.

As for the drawbacks, some of them—though, alas ! not the only one that really matters—can, and ought to be, remedied ; yet the food problem in the wilder parts of Greece is difficult to solve. At one moment we said to ourselves that our Napoleon might forcibly induce a couple of his henchwomen to master the preparation of a few simple dishes, such

as omelettes, rice-pudding, macaroni, and even lamb cutlets ; but on further reflection I do not think that even a six months' course under the head *chef* at Windsor Castle could turn Mesdames Aspiotis and Ambriotis into passable cooks. Supply follows demand. The French care about *la bonne chère*, and in the remotest parts of the Auvergne a peasant will take a few sticks, an old frying-pan, and a couple of eggs, and in five minutes produce as perfect an omelette as you could get in any Parisian restaurant. The Greek peasant lives on onions, bread, and air, consequently his womenkind have no notion of cooking, though in the towns, as we have seen, excellent food and splendid wine can always be had. I think Ghiolman should give up the notion that you can get anything but good soup and bread at places like Tripi and Andritsaena, and supply you, as part of the bargain, with tinned food. In the same way he ought himself to see to it that you are given decent beds ; and I daresay he will in future, for on this point we were explicit when we returned to Athens.

Otherwise there was little or nothing to complain of. Except at Karditza and Trikala the hotels are quite endurable and the beds clean. Insects are probably more prevalent in autumn than in the spring, and fleas have never taken interest in me ; but E. is less fortunately constituted and met with them more than once. Also at one cheap and nasty pension we tried at Athens she reported having seen some " horrid-

Emberson, Woking.

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR AND PAN III.
(1927).

looking little round things" on the wall above her bed, but had no actual encounter with that genus there or elsewhere. In fact, we consider this particular evil is much exaggerated. But perhaps I ought to add that as a rule we were so sleepy by bedtime that stoats and weasels could have attacked us without disturbing our slumbers; and in the morning we were in such a hurry to get off, that the effect of their ravages might have escaped attention. The ideal way to travel Greece would of course be with tents and a cook, as our friends the Rodds did when Sir Rennell was Minister at Athens; also, if I remember right, Maurice Hewlett and his daughter. But to do it in walking-tour style with a rucksack would be impossible even for the youngest and hardiest Greek-speaking tourist, because of the immense distances and the absence of food and sleeping accommodation.

One of our chief and pleasantest surprises was the people themselves. Judging, I now think, by all one has heard and seen of Levantines and Greek traders generally, we had braced ourselves to find a clever but unsympathetic race in possession of the land of our dreams. Not at all; whether in town or in the country, whether of the landlord, shopkeeper, or agricultural class, almost every soul we met was kind, courteous, and superlatively well bred. On the other hand, compared with South Italians, for instance, they seemed to us very slow in the uptake. I think, however, that the remoteness of the language and the

barrier of a different lettering (and oh ! what a beautiful sight is a Greek newspaper !) may have a good deal to do with it ; possibly Turks and Arabs produce a similar impression of slowness on the foreigner.

Yet on reflection certain incidents tend to confirm the view that the Greeks are not " bright " in the American sense of the word. Why did it occur to no one to help us in our steamer dilemmas at Poros and Aegina ? And is it permissible that a railway inspector should neither understand his own time-table nor be acquainted with the engrained habits of the trains in his own district, which was the case of our kind friend at Larissa ?

And there are other traits which make you wonder if this people thinks enough ; for instance, the launching forth into roads that are never finished, the profusion of electric bulbs, and switches, and bathrooms, in places where, as far as you can judge, the authorities had no settled intention of installing either electric current or water-supply.[1] Again, why should a people who are for ever complaining of poverty permit all business to come to a standstill in their capital between 12 and 3 o'clock, even in the winter months ?

[1] I notice while revising these pages for the Press (autumn, 1926) that a correspondent to *The Times*, all in lauding the splendid energy displayed in the reconstruction of Macedonia, notes with astonishment that several fine new streets have been laid down in Salonica, though, so far, no comprehensive scheme of water-supply and drainage has been adopted !

But the thing we found most distressing about the Greeks is the bead habit. The first time we saw grown men carrying about and perpetually fingering chains of amber beads we naturally thought it was some religious observance connected with Easter; when that theory became untenable we wondered if the idea was to cure themselves of smoking—until we saw a taxi-driver simultaneously playing with his beads and puffing a cigarette! Alas! the true explanation is idleness and love of fidgeting. As a mother gives her baby a necklace in order to keep it quiet, so the baby's papa presents himself with a chain of amber beads. I am told it is a Mohammedan custom, a telling of the rosary connected with the twenty-nine attributes of God; but nowadays, whether with the Turks or other Levantines who have unfortunately caught the habit, it is simply what a foreign friend of mine calls a "cretinous trick", and I do earnestly wish the Greeks would break themselves of it.

Altogether I find it hard to picture to myself what the future of this country will be, all the more so when you think of what has happened during the last hundred years, beginning with the national effort that swept Byron into its orbit and gave a great man a chance of a great and glorious death. The words "The Greek War of Independence" used to bore me terribly; but when you have seen the extreme poverty of the country combined with total absence of organisation; and when you realise that for centuries it had

been in the grip of alien races—a situation utterly without issue, so one would have thought—the War of Independence seems to me one of the greatest historical miracles that can ever have taken place. To this day no one quite knows how it came about, but I feel certain that for a race which by sheer force of passion and with everything against it thus achieved its freedom, a great fate must be reserved.

Being short of time we kept clear of society and sought out no one in Athens, but I should like to hear the opinion of really intelligent foreigners who know the country on this question of its future. The few chance English we met seemed to be of two kinds. Either they were sentimental, possessive adorers of the Greeks, professing to admire them for felling their forests, extolling their lack of rudimentary knowledge of cooking, maintaining that turpentine and water is the authentic nectar drunk on Olympus, and so on (this class, on discovering that we ourselves loved the country and the people, would sometimes whip round and become critical). Or else they were loud in abuse of the whole place, ringing the changes on its poverty, its hideousness, its dullness, and the stupidity of the inhabitants. Indeed, one man who had what we considered a most enviable post declared that another year in those God-forsaken climes would drive him mad; he seemed too limp from boredom even to summon up a pitying smile at our fatuous enthusiasm. In short, as it appeared to me (I here disassociate

myself from my more modest companion), the exact frame of mind the occasion demanded—that is to say, a judicious mixture of warmest sympathy and temperate criticalness—was achieved by only two persons in the country—the writer of these pages and her great-niece; yet stay, on reflection, a third name should be added, that of Mr. Woodley, who I seriously think would agree with most of the judgements and opinions above expressed.

And now in conclusion, a point of first importance: the financial aspect of our adventure.

A very expensive item in a trip to Greece is the getting there, unless you are prepared to go all the way by sea; and as we were tied for time we travelled out by the most extravagant train in Europe, the Orient Express, and lived in it for three whole days. And on the return journey, though we went second-class from the Piraeus to Brindisi, as any one can do with comfort on those fine Lloyd Triestino steamers, I believe you can travel first-class more cheaply still on humbler boats. Altogether I calculate that getting there and back cost each of us £60.

With regard to our expenses in the country itself, one must remember that the whole thing was a plunge into the unknown; that because of the time limit we were determined, though by no means spendthrifts, not to embitter our days with haggling, and also not to select this great moment of our lives for heroic

efforts at economy. Given all this, and assuming the estimates collected in London were fairly reasonable, I had calculated that the cost of a forty-one-days' tour, including the journey there and back, might come to anything between £150 and £200 per head. The real figure turned out to be £110 per head, including tips and everything ; and I am certain that any one who is not clipped fast by inexorable dates, and would take the trouble to hammer out a trip such as ours with Ghiolman, would be astonished to learn how cheaply it could be done. Meanwhile I will mention, as a study in relativity, that a certain section of our tour estimated for by London, including dragoman, of course, at £84 actually came to less than £45.

As regards the cost of life in Greece, the two best hotels in Athens are expensive, though, as I said, we, as passing travellers, compounded at the Hôtel d'Angleterre for pension at 250 drachmas—that is, at the then rate of exchange, about 16s. 6d. per diem. But there are cheaper hotels (and also pensions) known to Ghiolman, of which you never hear in London, and we gathered that for residents who know the ropes, life, even in Athens, is absurdly cheap. Elsewhere in Greece the trouble would be to know how, when, and where to spend money; and if one chose to master as much modern Greek as most people contrive to learn of Italian in Italy, Greece would be the Paradise of the Indigent.

There must be many such to whom, like the writer,

the hope of getting to Greece some day has been for a lifetime the best dream of all. And there are perhaps others who had not fully realised what that country stands for in the intellectual history of the world till certain recent books like *The Legacy of Greece* opened their eyes. Forthwith their hearts will have burned within them (as did mine, lover of Greece from youth upwards though I be, when I read that book) and a passionate desire to set foot on the soil of ancient Hellas will have shot up in their bosoms like a flame . . . to expire slowly and surely under an icy douche of costs, doubts, and difficulties played upon it by our oddly pessimistic tourist agencies !

It is for the victims of these that I have written . . . fellow-Greek maniacs who will gladly buy with a little discomfort a lasting enrichment of their lives. And in spite of the shattering pronouncement of my friend—a pronouncement which I confess haunts me at times—I believe that for these I shall not have written in vain !

Autumn 1926.

THE END

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